Popular Religion and Ritual
in prehistoric and ancient Greece and the eastern Mediterranean

edited by

Giorgos Vavouranakis, Konstantinos Kopanias
and Chrysanthos Kanellopoulos

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Popular religion and ritual: introductory notes

Giorgos Vavouranakis

Religion and ritual are exciting yet puzzling and difficult topics of research, as their study benefits significantly from an understanding of past people's metaphysical beliefs. Prehistoric archaeology, whose lack of textual sources restricts its affordances for empathy entirely, often abandons the effort to reconstruct systems of religious ideas and, instead, tries to analyse the ways in which such systems affected past ways of life. As much as this alternative aim seems to be, and is, feasible, it asks archaeologists to reach into the deep structural levels of past cultures and understand some of the principles that underlie their mechanics. Traditional archaeology has been rather keen to undertake such quests, as it maintained that they promised to deliver knowledge on the very essence of past cultures in a direct and objective manner. When the culture-historical project proved ineffective in the mid-1960s, processual archaeologists suggested that the search for the symbolic content of past people's actions was chimeric. Instead, they argued, archaeology should be looking at the social functions of the ideological subsystem, where religion and ritual belonged, and the ways in which this sub-system was part of the overall system of any past society and appropriated processes of politico-economic evolution.

Since the 1980s the post-processual paradigm renewed archaeological interest in the meaning of material culture. This meaning was sought through contextual analysis which promised to give access to the grammar and syntax of the material remains of past religious and other ritual acts. The venture made it clear that the same set of artifacts is capable of having held different meanings. Then, emphasis shifted on the affordances of material culture to host diverse symbolic contents and the ability of the latter to be active rather than passive social constituents. In parallel, the cognitive processual response to post-processual approaches, particularly Colin Renfrew's (1994) work, attempted to re-conceptualise religion and ritual and to create a checklist of criteria according to which archaeologists should be examining the material record in their quest for past religious beliefs and practices and their social significance.

These paradigmatic shifts have had a heavy impact upon prehistoric archaeology, but they have long reached other subdisciplinary fields, such as Classical or east Mediterranean and Near Eastern archaeology. The latter are frequently better equipped with written and textual sources that, on the one hand, allow a meticulous reconstruction of past religious beliefs and cult practices, while, on the other hand, they have been fruitfully cross-fertilised with the advances in archaeological theory regarding the social dimensions of ancient and Near Eastern cult practices (for example, see the relevant chapters in Raja and Rüpke 2015).

Despite such theoretical richness and paradigmatic diversity, Insoll (2004: 1) complained that a textbook on the archaeology of religion was still lacking by 2004. A decade and more later, the picture is different, as several co-authored volumes and one handbook have appeared (indicatively see Barrowclough and Malone 2007; Insoll 2012; Kyriakidis 2007; Laneri 2015; Rowan 2012 and papers in the same volume; Steadman 2009; Wesler 2012). Such bulk of past research begets the question why another collective volume on religion and ritual, especially related to Greece and the east Mediterranean in Prehistory and in Antiquity. Both areas and periods are well researched and, evidently, contributions towards the understanding of religion and ritual abound (e.g. see Laffineur and Hägg 2001 and Alram-Stern *et al.* 2016 for two comprehensive related contributions in Aegean archaeology or papers in Johnston 2004 for an east Mediterranean perspective).

The answer lies in the focus of the present volume upon the popular aspects of religion and ritual, namely the beliefs and practices shared by large groups of people, which usually comprise the lower tiers of society. This aspect of ritual is not well studied, despite notable exceptions, which mostly concern ancient Greece and range from Nilsson's (1940) seminal study to recent contributions (e.g. see Collins 2008; Mikalson 2010). These exceptions are frequently the result of research in the field of Classical Studies than *sensu stricto* Classical archaeology. This comment does not underplay the importance of such interdisciplinary research. It only wishes to point out that excavations at Classical sites have mostly targeted public buildings and major sanctuaries, sometimes at the expense of the material remains of more private, informal and even subaltern aspects of social life in Antiquity.

In Aegean archaeology discussion is usually restricted to peak sanctuaries, which are usually interpreted as places of worship that stayed outside the control of the Minoan palaces, at least in their Middle Minoan phase (c. 2000-1700 B.C.). Peatfield (2000) has further noted that ordinary and popular cult practices, including but not restricted to the ones accommodated in peak sanctuaries, were more focused on the experiential aspect of ritual and aimed to serve individual concerns, such as personal health. By contrast Minoan elites employed religion as a means of advertising their power and prestige. This topic has dominated research on Minoan religion. A similar focus may be observed in Mycenean research, although Robin Hägg (1981) had long acknowledged the existence of a popular sphere of ritual practices. Research discourse on the religion and ritual practices in the prehistoric and ancient east Mediterranean and the Near East cultures demonstrates similar thematic tendencies, such as the role of temples in state formation and the emergence of institutionalized systems of belief, such as the Canaanite, Hittite, Mesopotamian or Egyptian *panthea* of gods or Judaism (recent review by Stephens 2016).

On the one hand, such emphasis is at least partially understandable, as the institutionalization of religious belief and cult practice in all these early societies went hand in hand with the emergence of the first states which heralded the passage to higher levels of social complexity (recent review of the argument by Maran 2016). On the other hand, elites exist only because there are subjects, on whom authority may be exercised, and these subjects may also retain – as they did in many cases in the wider region and the time span under study here – their distinct religious ideologies and ritual activities. In Maurice Bloch's words: 'The creation of this transcendental holistic image of the complete kingdom, including gods and men, thus requires the creation of the incompleteness and disorganization of the subjects' transcendental social, which can only be made complete in the kingdom' (Bloch 2008: 2058). As much as past research has certainly acknowledged this aspect of social life, there seems to be still a lot of ground to be covered. The present volume addresses these gaps in knowledge.

A detailed understanding of the research potential of popular rites, and, indeed, of any topic related to religion, requires a few key-definitions. Even more so since archaeologists have frequently been quick to interchangeably ascribe religious, cultic or ritual significance to remains that simply puzzle them in terms of their function. Consequently, diverse past material remains have been lumped together in a single, untheorized and unproblematized interpretative framework. A part of this problem is understandable because religion is about the metaphysical beliefs that people held in the past, namely collective attitudes towards what lies out of the ordinary. More specifically, religion may be defined as a system of beliefs and practices. These refer to a supernatural order, include the irrational and aim at the understanding of the human condition and its place in the world. Communication with the supernatural order is an important aspect of religion (for detailed discussion and references see particularly Insoll 2004: 6-13; Steadman 2009: 21-23; Stephen 2016: 4-9). Hence human acts are respectively characterized as cultic or votive, when they aim at the veneration of this supernatural order or focus on its commemoration. As the supernatural order itself is out of the physical perceptual abilities of human beings, its existence and power reside in sacred texts and/or in the performative stability of religious acts. The importance of faithful repetition renders religious acts ritualised and ritualisation is such a key-feature to religion and cult that the terms, religion and ritual are inextricably intertwined. This close relation is accentuated by the common goal of both religion and ritual, namely the renegotiation of the social order. Hence people frequently mistake one concept for the other. Nevertheless, religion and ritual are not identical. For example, a representation of the supernatural order, such as a painting depicting Virgin Mary, may not attain a ritual character. Reversely, there are ritual acts which are not religious and ritualisation may characterise a wide spectrum of human conduct. The power of ritual is strictly in its performance (Bell 1992), which may accommodate diverse and even contrasting meanings together, whereas religious ritual entails the additional but essential reference to the supernatural order. For Peatfield (2001), this may not be necessarily a problem. Not only is empathizing with past people a precarious venture, but the performative and experiential aspect of cult is frequently much more crucial than its significatory elements.

The intricate connection between religion and ritual and the emphasis on the performance of the latter also brings funerary action close to religion. It is also about ritual performances and operates through reference to a supernatural and frequently irrational order, which defines the afterlife status of the dead. There are ethnographic cases where the distinctions between the living, the elders, the dead ancestors and gods are not clear cut but, actually an issue of relative difference (Bloch 2008: 2056-2057). Nevertheless, funerary rites do not have to communicate with the dead or their supernatural order, in any case an unlikely religious action. Often it is enough simply to refer to them. Religion and ritual are also close to magic and witchcraft. The latter also entails ritualized behaviour, while it refers to and communicates with the irrational and by extension the supernatural. It was also related to death as sorcerers had to evoke the powers of the demons of death in ancient Greece (Johnston 2008) and the gods of the underworld in Hittite culture (Collins 2002). The difference between magic and religion is that the former aims at the control of social reality rather than its symbolic appropriation and frequently works instrumentally to the benefit of specific individuals. By contrast, religion and ritual are about the collective ethos and the shared values that regulate the function of society (for a fundamental treatment of the topic see Hubert and Mauss 1902-1903: 6; for magic in the ancient world see Graff 1997).

An important feature of both funerary ritual and magic is their popular element. The latter is particularly strong in funerary ritual, simply because all people die eventually and society has to deal with them. For this reason, archaeologists have often approached funerary ritual as a field of activity with a potential to express – either reaffirm or negate – issues of wider social importance, such as differences in social rank or hierarchy. Contrary to funerary ritual, magic may be either a popular or an elite activity, because it may be performed by both high and average status members of society. It may often be an extension of religion, but there are instances, such as during the Middle Ages, where magic and especially witchcraft were condemned by official religion.

The word 'official' is a key to the current discussion as it introduces a contrast to the popular aspects of religion and ritual, which constitute the main theme of this volume. Religion often becomes official, in other words, institutionalised. This phenomenon is due to the performative stability required by the ritual character of cult practices, whose efficiency ensures the sustainability of the belief system that lies at the heart of any religion. This institutionalisation makes religion similar and ties it to other social institutions, especially to political institutions. For example, religion and political authority were almost one and the same in ancient Egypt, where the Pharaoh was assumed to be a god on earth. In other cases, religion and political authority are distinct but closely related, as in the case of the ancient Greek polis which featured an official state religion.

Such close connection between religion and authority does not only hinge on their common institutionalized character. Formalised and stereotyped cult and other ritual activity frequently becomes an instrument in the hands of elites. These social groups seek to legitimise their place via ideological means, especially through reference to the supernatural, because the latter is an entity one cannot argue against. Thus, religion may become an instrument of wider social persuasion since every sovereignty needs the steady consent of its subjects. It is precisely this ability of religion that prompted Marx's critique, which includes his famous quote that religion is 'das Opium des Volkes' (Marx 1976: 378), meaning that religion may become an instrument in the hands of the ruling elites so as to prevent working classes from becoming socio-politically self-conscious and opposing oppression.

In the light of this Marxian orthodoxy, the term 'popular religion' may at first strike as an oxymoron. Nevertheless, ordinary people may produce their own versions of official cult or other types of ritual activity or even their own systems of belief and practice and maintain them outside elite control. There is no better example than Christianity itself, which started as an anti-establishment religion in the Roman empire and then developed into one of the examples, par excellence, of authoritative institutions in the late Roman and Medieval periods. It seems then that religion may be either for or against political institutions, or it may be both.

This multi-faceted social role of religion, in both its official and popular varieties, is also illustrated in the wider context of Marx's critique on religion: 'Die Religion ist der Seufzer der bedrängten Kreatur, das Gemüt einer herzlosen Welt, wie sie der Geist geistloser Zustände ist. Sie ist das Opium des Volkes' (Marx 1976: 378). Alternative readings of this work (McKinnon 2005) argue that Marx was not entirely opposed to the ability of opium to offer utopian illusions to its users. Much like opium, the illusions of religion were not seen only as part of false social consciousness but also as a springboard for the people to start pursuing something more out of their lives, such as a change in their miserable living conditions. This way of reading Marx affords religion the twin role that has already been noted above. On the one hand, it secures social subordination and on the other hand it has the potential to comfort people, allowing them to overcome their social miseries and virtually affording them to take social action.

The particular contribution of popular religion and ritual to wider processes of socio-historical evolution may take different forms. In societies with a strong official religion, popular rites may remain restricted as a self-contained phenomenon at the foot of the social pyramid. In other cases, a popular religion may become a vehicle of social and political change, hence religious activism. In between these two extremes lie other possibilities for the social role of popular religion, which may encroach on the periphery of an official cult apparatus and start to change the latter as well as the wider social status quo in a piecemeal manner. This process brings to mind the work of the French philosopher Michel Serres (1980) on the *parasite*, as a metaphor for slow non-systematic bottom-up processes of social transformation.

When it comes to archaeology, perhaps the most dominant question within research on religion, either official or popular, is its footprint in the archaeological record. This question becomes acute within the study of non-literate societies such as the ones in the Prehistoric Aegean. Research remains largely based upon Renfrew's (1985: 19-20) methodology which places emphasis on the identification of a series of correlates. These may be concentrated at places that are exceptional either due to the natural setting (e.g. caves) or their architecture; extraordinary or special types of artifacts (e.g. the Aegean Bronze Age rhyta, figurines), food or drink to be sacrificed, offered to the deity, or consumed by the attendants themselves; iconography depicting the deities themselves, ritual gestures or symbols.

Renfrew was cautious enough to underline that collective ceremonial activity is easier to trace than domestic ritual. He also pointed out that the finding of specific categories of artefacts may not be enough to assign a religious character to a specific space. His words of caution do nothing more than bring up the importance of contextual analysis as a way of understanding the – religious in the current discussion – meaning, of excavation finds. His views also afford, albeit implicitly, the suggestion that a religious element may co-exist within mundane contexts of activity. For example, a small cult installation may be part of an otherwise ordinary household. Polysemy then may extend to artefacts of religious significance, and the archaeologist should bear in mind this capacity of material culture to hold multiple meanings. Only iconography and texts may be of some assistance to the archaeologist who tries to distinguish which of these meanings may have been more dominant than the others and to provide clues for their symbolic content.

All these issues were explored in December 2012, during an international two-day conference at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, which aimed to address the relationship between religion, ritual and social organization. Thirty-three papers were presented during this conference. They covered a long time span from the Bronze Age to the Classical period and the geographical distribution of their case studies included mainland Greece, the Aegean including Crete, Cyprus and the east Mediterranean. Some of the papers favoured a formalist view of religion as an officially organised system of beliefs and practice and argued for an oxymoron in the term ‘popular religion’. Others, especially the ones that focused on Greek Antiquity, suggested that popular religion and ritual may exist as a subordinate version of the official apparatus and both may be part of an overall comprehensive religious system. Finally, there were papers that relocated the distinction of popular vs. official religion to the binary opposition between private and public ritual. According to their arguments public rituals are more formalised because wide public participation them results in closer monitoring of social behaviour. Private rituals are more open to personal improvisation.

The chapters of this volume are selected and re-worked papers from the above conference. **Giorgos Vavouranakis** reviews the evidence of funerary and religious ritual in Crete during the early 2nd millennium B.C., a period that marks the establishment of the first palaces. This review allows him to argue in favour of popular rites spreading throughout the island and reflecting the rise of the multitude, namely social groupings with relatively loose horizontal organization operating at a regional scale. It is further argued that the rise of the palatial ceremonial centres and their related elite political authority was a response to the emergence of the multitude.

The next two chapters partly reinforce and partly counterpoint the above argument. **Ilaria Caloi** focuses on the ceramic evidence form Phaistos and its surrounding area in south-central Crete during the early 2nd millennium B.C. She argues that the Middle Minoan IB, namely the very beginning of the Old Palace period is characterised by ritual activities at cemeteries with a rather restricted funerary content. They may have been mostly – albeit not exclusively – popular rites aiming to challenge the emergence of the palace at Phaistos and its elite-controlled communal ceremonies. This argument also explains better the rather late construction of tholos tombs at Kamilari and Ayia Triada as places of popular ritual, since they were architecturally impressive but received very few burials. This pattern that changed in the Middle Minoan II period.

Matthew Haysom focuses on peak sanctuaries, which are also a characteristic of Minoan Crete in the Old Palace period or the early 2nd millennium B.C. An exhaustive critical review of the available evidence allows him to argue that these sanctuaries were neither exclusive manifestations of popular cult activity, nor strictly defined arenas for elite display. He argues that a nuanced understanding of this phenomenon allows their definition as places of cult that were outside palatial control, although the elite was still able to penetrate them and promote its ideology through symbolically charged votive depositions, such as figurines of bulls and athletic men. The emblematic use of similar iconographic motifs on seals by the elites of the following Neopalatial period further reinforces Haysom’s argument, that peak sanctuaries were not a popular, but rather a contested arena of cult ritual activity.

Santo Privitera examines a well-known feature of Minoan Crete, namely conical cups found inverted. An extensive review of the available evidence dating throughout the Bronze Age leads to the suggestion that there is a stable link between inverted cups and the burning of a solid substance in burial, palatial and domestic contexts. Nevertheless, there are cases where inverted cups are found associated with pouring vessels suggesting toasting ceremonies. Privitera concludes that turning the cups upside down was part of more than one types of ritual, but the gradual transference of this feature from funerary to domestic contexts may be telling of its relation to veneration rites in memory of house ancestors.

Lefteris Platon discusses a Minoan *chytros* from Zakros, namely a clay cooking vessel featuring a series of miniature cupules on its upper body. It is argued that the chytros was used in ritual activities in a non-palatial and thus popular environment. Ritual may have included the preparation and offering and/or consumption of food, possibly pulses and the consumption of drink. Platon connects the chytros to the much later *Anthesteria*, a festival with chthonic character related to the fertility of the earth that took place in ancient Athens every year. This connection suggests that the vessel from Zakros was part of a prehistoric predecessor of Anthesteria. **Annette Højen Sørensen, Walter Friedrich and Kirsten Molly Søholm** focus on the wall-paintings found at Akroteri, Thera. Contrary to the established view of these paintings as fine examples of elite art and ideology, they argue that their iconographic themes exhibit a common underlying interest in the principles of transformation and hybridity. These principles are sought in motifs of spirals, scenes related to the cyclical passage of time and in scenes that mix human beings with plants and animals.

The themes of the following three chapters are about ritual in the Mycenaean world. **Helène Whittaker** criticises the established approach to Mycenean religion and cult ritual, which sees a dichotomy between elite practices of Minoan inspiration and popular practices of a local Helladic genealogy. Her extensive review of the available evidence leads her to suggest instead a division between formal and informal rites. The former were official ceremonies, attended by large both elite and non-elite groups of people. The latter were restricted to the household or the family and were related either to house activities or funerary customs. **Nagia Polychronakou Sgouritsa** in a way agrees with Whittaker but focuses on the typology and the context of Mycenaean figurines from various sites of Attica, Aegina and Keos. She distinguishes a few unique examples, such as the triple groups of figures, which have been mainly found in tombs and several of them in association with child burials. She attempts to tentatively connect them to later groups of divine figures, such as the Fates, the Graces and the Hours. Nevertheless, she offers a word of caution as regards the meaning and social function of the figurines, including their elite or popular character. These frequently remain elusive despite the existence of adequate contextual information.

Eleni Salavoura examines the evidence for cult activities on two mountain tops, Lykaion in Arcadia and Oros on Aegina. The sanctuary on Mount Lykaion featured acts related to food and drink consumption. Mount Oros has yielded votive objects, including a hoard of bronzes and a stone mould for making double axes. Both sanctuaries are connected to popular cult, perhaps aimed at controlling nature and the weather in favour of their respective communities. The chapter by **Theodore Eliopoulos** re-focuses on Crete, this time in the 12th and 11th centuries B.C. It approaches the large clay figurines of the so-called 'Minoan Goddesses with Upraised Arms' as elements of past palatial ritual practices of the Late Bronze Age that survived in a popularized form in the Early Iron Age. His argument is based both on the finds contexts of these figurines and on an elaborate analogy with popular Christian religious practices, such as the litanies.

Anastasia Leriou examines the Cypro-Archaic sanctuaries and argues for homogenous ritual practices throughout the island, permeating both elite and non-elite social groups. Such homogeneity, in her opinion, may point to an uninterrupted ritual tradition from the Late Bronze Age open-air sanctuaries to their Cypro-Archaic counterparts. The common cultural identity that the inhabitants of Cyprus seem to have shared despite the political fragmentation of the island probably hinged upon these widely shared ritual practices and was employed as a counterbalance to the successive occupations of Cyprus by the Assyrians, the Egyptians and the Persians. **Electra Apostola** discusses the representations of Bes, a demon god of Egypt and the Levant, in the Dodecanese, especially in Rhodes and Samos. She argues that Rhodes was a gateway for the diffusion of the images of Bes in the Aegean and the central Mediterranean. Figurines of Bes were dedicated at sanctuaries probably due to the magical powers of the god. Bes seems to have been widely adopted in popular ritual practices, suggesting that commonly held religious beliefs endorsed his apotropaic role and his ability to protect mothers with their infant children.

Valia Papanastasopoulou presents a study on the typology, function and meaning of so-called Judean Pillar Figurines of the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. She links them to the popular cult of goddess Asherah, which was practiced on mountains and mostly in domestic contexts. They may have been considered images of the goddess and were connected to beliefs about fertility and/or the protection of infants. Interestingly, their role ended when they were broken, as they were discarded in a casual manner. Such a cult was against the official monotheism of the monarchic state of Judah and its appearance is linked to the Assyrian and Babylonian pressure upon and subsequent domination of Israel at the time.

Papanastasopoulou closes the suite of papers on the eastern Mediterranean. The themes of the remaining five chapters are about ancient Greece. Two of them are about binding spells and curses in ancient Athens. **Jessica L. Lamont** and **Georgia Boundouraki** review the textual and artifactual evidence on ritual cursing. Then proceed with the examination of a set of cursing tablets found in Athens, underneath the modern Piraios Street, an area that probably belonged to the ancient deme of Xypete. Their analysis of binding and cursing rites illuminates the world of private and thus popular cult and other ritual activity, which co-existed alongside the official ceremonies of the city-state. **Yiannis Chairetakis** presents an inscribed bowl from Salamis, dating to the fourth century B.C. The analysis of the remains of the text of the inscription suggest that this item had been used to bind a family and had been probably placed strategically in a domestic pit towards this aim. Chairetakis is thus able to connect this bowl to popular practices of household worship in the wider area of Classical Athens.

The next two chapters are about terracottas found in caves. **Maria Spathi** examines a group of mostly male and a few female figurines with Silenous, human and animal masks from a cave at Lechova, Corinthia and dated to the Classical period. The parallels from other sites suggest that these figurines were employed in initiation rites associated with age stages and probably the transformation of young people to grown-ups. The ritual may have included music and dancing. Spathi concludes that the ceremonial performances afforded a wide audience and were thus important aspects of social life. **Socrates Koursoumis** discusses a group of seventeen Classical and Early Hellenistic terracottas depicting women from a cave at Demiova on the Messenian slope of Mount Taygetos, a site which may not be located today. The terracottas suggest extra-urban cult activities in honour of a female deity, possibly Orthis, the patron goddess of ancient Sparta and protector of nature, child bearing, birth and nurturing. The existence of a sanctuary is indicative of the importance of the Messenian landscape, which seems to have been much more than a catchment area and probably imbued with metaphysical meaning.

The last chapter by **Panos Valavanis** proceeds to boldly contrast the ancient Olympic games and athletic activities that take place as part of religious ceremonies in the tradition of the Christian Orthodox church in Greece. These activities include hiking, swimming, racing and even shot-putting, stone tossing and wrestling. He argues that the games constitute popular attempts to influence nature in favour of the people and their farming and pastoral activities and their genealogy goes back to the Olympic Games and other sporting events that happened in the context of religious ceremonies in ancient Greece.

The present volume features the usual diversity of co-authored works with both its strengths and weaknesses. Thus, its individual chapters are written by specialists and may thus examine case studies in a meticulous manner but inevitably, they are not able to offer overviews on popular religion and ritual in their respective areas and periods. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw a few common threads.

One of them is an enriched definition of popular religion and ritual as the beliefs and practices shared by many people, especially from the non-elite tiers of society, regardless of whether these practices are open to public participation and/or monitoring, whether the host is a high-status group or whether both elite and non-elite members participate in them or not. Furthermore, and as with most aspects of human behaviour, popular religion and ritual are not tightly bounded entities, but rather connected with the rest of the social web, as one of the many versions of religious system and ritual practice that any given community adopts.

The most important aspect of popular rites seems to be their social function. They are able to offer better social connectivity and promote social cohesion at large spatial scales, as in the case of Bes in the Dodecanese and even prompt reaction from the upper echelons of societies, such as the Minoan palatial phenomenon or the state of Judah. More often they run next to official cults, as in the cases of Mycenean and ancient Greece. They are also afforded people to make sense of wider social transformations, as in the case of the Mother Goddess with Upraised Arms or Cypriot popular rites at the transition from the Bronze to the Early Iron Age. Such a social role is perhaps what the present volume may offer in the on-going discourse on religion and ritual in the prehistoric and ancient Greece and the East Mediterranean.

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Ritual, multitude and social structure in Minoan Crete

Giorgos Vavouranakis

Introduction

Popular images of Minoan Crete frequently include scenes of ritual activity, such as processions, human figures in front of altars, or sanctuaries sometimes full of people. Indeed, research holds that ritual was not simply a fundamental component of social life on the island, but also a main axis of socio-historical evolution through the third and second millennium BC. Thus, it has been recently suggested that the Minoan palaces, the par excellence feature of Bronze Age Crete, were the equivalents of Syrian temples and not places of political authority (Schoep 2012). This is not the place to examine the political vs. ritual debate concerning the character of the Minoan palaces. It suffices to note that ritual and other ceremonial activities, especially the ones with public participation, were part and parcel of the palatial phenomenon, which also included the transformation of Crete from a series of small-scale communities to regional societies with institutional rather than kin-based organisation.

The palatial emergence was paralleled with a significant reinforcement of public ritual activity throughout Crete. Popular sanctuaries were established on mountain peaks. Caves attracted similar activities, too. At the beginning of the so-called Old Palace period or Middle Minoan (henceforth MM) IB in pottery terms (c. 2000-1900 BC) food and drink continued to be consumed outside tombs and in the open-air spaces of cemeteries, as it had been since the late Prepalatial period (Early Minoan and henceforth EM III – MM IA, c. 2300-2000 BC). Such acts are considered to have gradually disconnected from the strict identification with their mortuary context and, instead, to have acquired a generic symbolic and essentially social role (Vavouranakis 2007: 161).

This paper is concerned with the spreading of popular ritual in early second millennium BC Crete and, more specifically, the social dimension of this Old Palace phenomenon. To this aim, the paper reviews the main contexts of popular rituals and then argues that their adequate understanding requires the re-conceptualisation of the popular element of Minoan society as 'multitude' (Figure 1).

Peak sanctuaries

Peak sanctuaries, as already mentioned, constitute one of the main expressions of popular ritual in MM Crete (Figure 2). They are examined in detail by Matthew Haysom in this volume, so only a few points pertinent to the present discussion are mentioned here. Peak sanctuaries were mostly naturally demarcated places, where people engaged in cultic acts and deposited figurines and other votive items. Most peak sanctuary sites allowed visual contact with other similar sites. This feature allowed the participants of ritual acts to feel connected to other groups of people in the wider region. Bogdan Rutkowski (1986: 94) further emphasised the connection of many such sanctuaries to pastoral activities, not only due to their position high up in the mountains but also because of the animal figurines deposited in them.

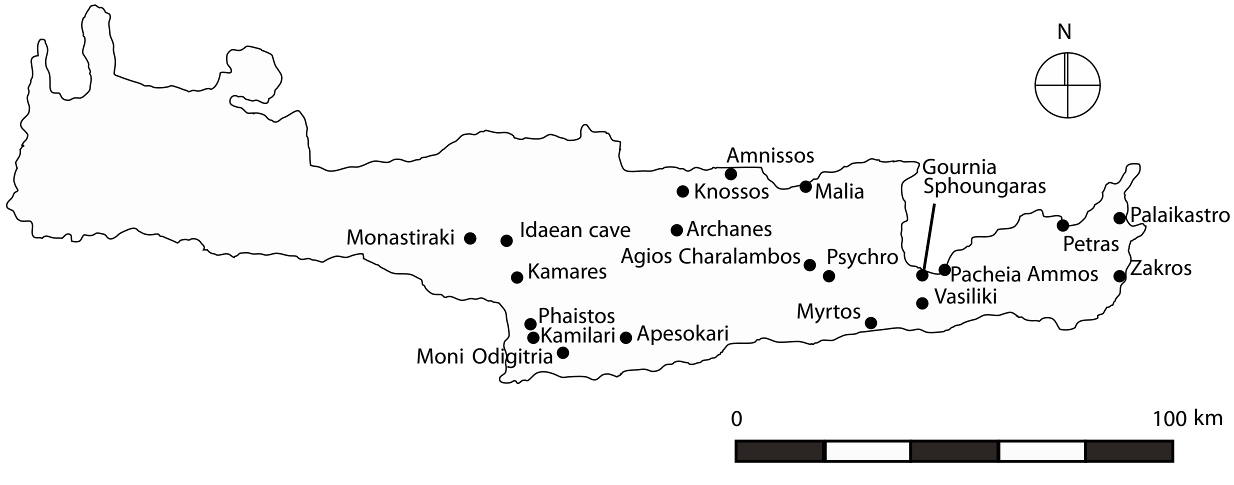

Figure 1: Map of Crete with main sites mentioned in the text.

John Cherry (1986) attempted to link the peak sanctuaries to the palaces and regarded them as territorial markers of political authority. This interpretation was countered by Alan Peatfield's (1990) study, which showed that each peak sanctuary had a strong local character and that the artefacts deposited are mostly non-palatial. Peatfield suggested that these sanctuaries were places of popular activity and probably ritual hubs for the communities of their respective regions. Donald Haggis (1999) tried to re-connect the peak sanctuaries to the palatial emergence. He proposed that the public gatherings constituted labour pools for the Old Palace elites. From his point of view the lack of palace-style depositions served the elites, which found a medium for the smooth penetration of the social web. Specifically, and always according to Haggis, the elites saw the peak sanctuaries as an occasion to manifest their leading abilities in decision making as regards issues of wider social interest, without having to openly confront the rest of the people. Interesting and nuanced as it may be, this interpretation is based largely upon negative evidence.

Steven Soetens (2006) has also studied the peak sanctuaries. He developed a GIS model, which allowed him to argue that they were placed at key-points for the circulation of people, especially in relation to agropastoral production, but that they were also closely connected to their surrounding settlements. Soetens' work strengthens the local and popular character of the peak sanctuaries. By contrast, Matthew Haysom (this volume) has shifted the discussion back to the elites. He links peak sanctuary votives to the Minoan elites through the predominant symbolic connotations of the former to masculinity and physical competition. He then argues that participation in peak sanctuaries was not restricted to the rural population. Rather, these sanctuaries were places of competition between the elites and the rest of the population and as a result they were both popular cult contexts and expressions of elite ideology. Haysom concludes that such a dual approach may resolve the opposition between pro-elite and non-elite interpretations.

Sacred caves

Caves are another context for ritual activity in Bronze Age Crete (Rutkowski 1986: 47-72; Tyree 2001; 2017). They had been used as hosts of social gatherings since the Neolithic (Tomkins 2013), as burial places and some of them, such as the Idean cave, as foci of ritual activities (Manteli, 2006). The Eilytheia cave at Amnissos may have been used either for burials or for cult activity

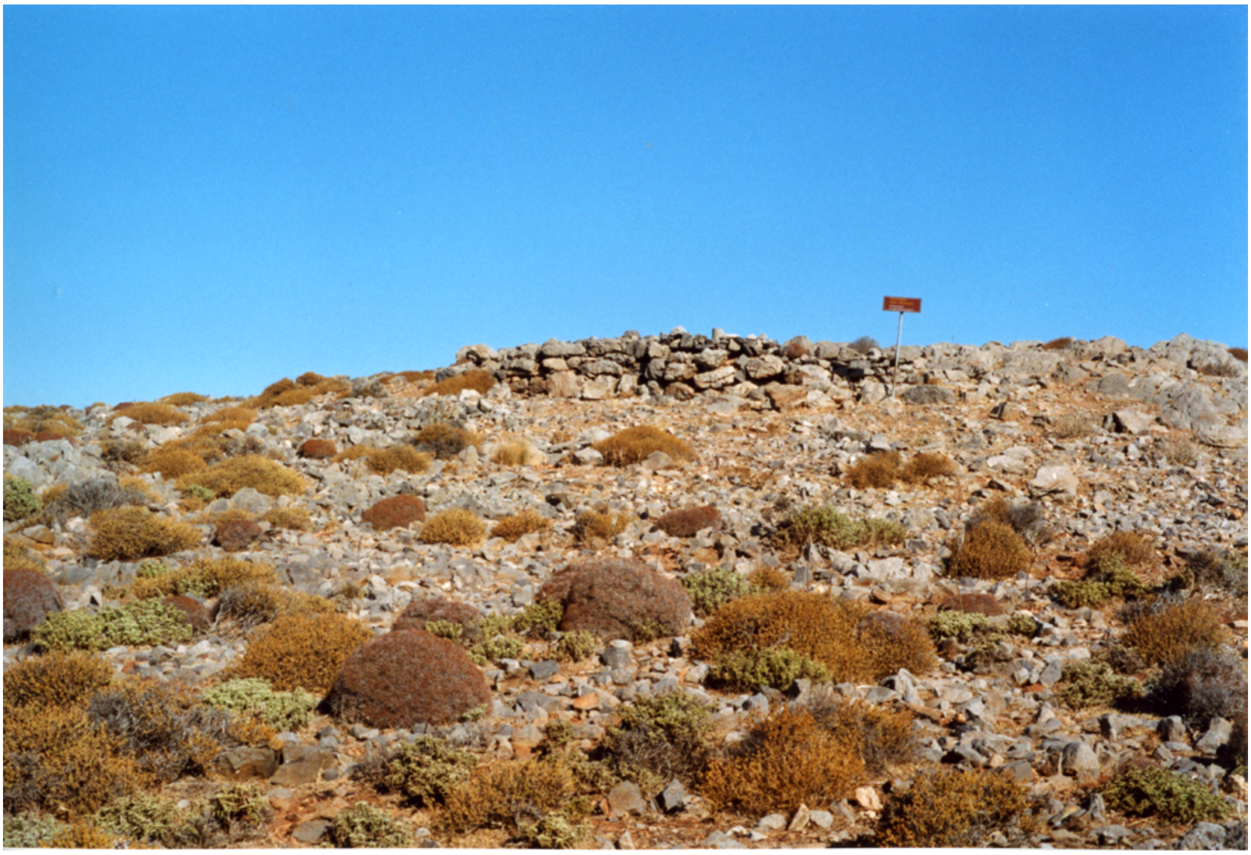

Figure 2: View of the peak sanctuary at Petsofas from the south-west (photo: author).

or both in the FN-EM II period (Tyree, 2006: 332). At the end of the Prepalatial period, the Idaean and the Kamares caves began to be used as places of cult. Cult activity extended to many other caves in the Old Palace period, but their related levels have been usually found mixed with the depositions of the New Palace period (MM III – Late Minoan – henceforth LM – I in pottery terms or c. 1700-1450 BC).

Ritual activity in these caves frequently revolved around stalagmites and parts of the bedrock shaped as altars and it probably hinged upon altered states of consciousness caused by the lack of light and/or by the lighting of fires. Humidity and the almost standard presence of the element of water in smaller or larger pools must have accentuated the ritual experience. Other features of sacred caves include the deposition of pottery and the consumption of drink, animal sacrifices and/or their meat consumption and the deposition of votives, such as figurines and, most distinctively, weapons. Many of the latter are non-functional and thus their deposition was a purely symbolic gesture (overview of the features of and ritual acts in caves by Tyree 2013).

Rutkowski (1986: 64-65) has argued that most of the sacred caves were places of popular pilgrimage and cult. However, the status items at the largest caves, such as the Idaean, Kamares and Psychro, are suggestive of elite involvement, at least in the New Palace period, when caves reach their full floruit as cult places. There is evidence to suggest that such involvement may be stretched back to the Old Palace period, too. Thus, the fine MM pottery deposited in the Kamares cave has strong links with the palace of Phaistos. For example, the spouted jar, which is one of the main vessel shapes of the Kamares assemblage, was the distinctive serving vessel at Phaistos (Van de Moortel 2011). Moreover, and following Haysom's (this volume) aforementioned reasoning about the importance of male symbolism in peak sanctuary votives, the deposition of weapons makes it possible to see an early elite interest in sacred caves, too. Such interest suggests that sacred caves, like peak sanctuaries, were one more context for the dynamic negotiation of elite and non-elite relations in the Old Palace period.

Cemeteries

It is well established that changes in funerary customs are linked to the transformation of Crete from a series of small EM communities to regional MM societies organised around institutions, which may have included a primary form of the state. For example, the consumption of food and drink at cemeteries declined and prominent tombs built above the ground were abandoned. Both these changes were gradual, as they did not become manifest until the end of MM IB, when most of the Old Palaces had been established. Nonetheless, the overlap with the appearance of new contexts of ritual activity, which, apart from the palaces, included the aforementioned peak sanctuaries and sacred caves, is taken to reflect the rising importance of a new type of social organization, which hinged upon the palaces and the public gatherings at their courts (Legarra Hererro 2014: 157-159). Any exceptions to this rule are usually explained as local archaistic retentions of older practices (Girella 2013: 158-159) allowed by the loose character of elite control in the Old Palace period (Knappett 1999). Alternatively, the shift of ritual focus from the cemetery to the palace is described as the triumph of an ideology of indigenism, which prevailed after the cessation of imports in EM IIB. According to this argument, palaces proved more suitable arenas for the ritual appropriation of such an ideology (Hamilakis 2014).

Public gathering areas

Public open-air spaces attained a crucial role in Minoan social life. The EM IIB settlement at Myrtos–Phournou Koryphi had a central open space above the remains of the EM IIA phase (Warren 1972: 22). EM II Vasiliki also featured a public space to the west of the West House (Zois 1976: 72). Phaistos (Todaro 2012) and Knossos (Tomkins 2012) had been featuring an open space each in the central parts of their respective hills since the Final Neolithic (henceforth FN) and EM I respectively. The fact that they were eventually succeeded by the central courts of the respective palaces is telling of their significance during the Prepalatial period, too.

These central courts are the defining features of the palaces, because they were architecturally designed around the former, hence the key-role of palatial courts not only in public ceremonies but in the circulation and overall function of the palatial buildings (Palyvou 2002). The west courts of the palaces are also very important. They constituted the meeting points between the palaces and the towns around them. The west court at Phaistos had additionally attained a long history of ceremonial activity (Todaro 2012). Public open-air spaces may be found outside exclusive palatial control, too. Monastiraki (Kanta 2006) features a central court that is partly open to public access and thus as much part of the settlement as of the palatial building itself. Gournia may have featured a public square, which was partly annexed later by the LM IB palatial building.

However, the best-known example of a non-palatial public space is the so-called Agora at Malia, which is surrounded by storage and ceremonial facilities, and houses. The Agora co-existed with the palace and Quartier Mu, a complex with both craft and ceremonial functions (Poursat 2010). The existence of three alternative hosts of public ceremonies has been interpreted as evidence of a heterarchical organisation, namely of horizontally connected corporate groups, each controlling one of the three aforementioned architectural complexes. The political authority is assumed to have resided in Quartier Mu rather than the palace. The latter has been recently considered a Minoan equivalent to the prehistoric Syrian temples (Schoep 2012). A related supposedly bottom-up argument about the identity of the palatial authority holds that the palaces were the result of the agency of 'houses' (Driessen 2010). The latter are conceptualised as corporate and thus heterarchically inter-connected groups, whose constitution was based either on real or on imaginary ties of common family descent and usually but not exclusively on co-residence.

This is not the place to assess the validity of the above interpretations. It suffices to point out that the emphasis has been again placed on the top of the social pyramid. Even the argument for the agency of 'houses' essentially explores how a few small groups rose from the bottom to the top of the social pyramid. One more example may illustrate this interpretative tendency. A phenomenological study (Letesson and Vansteenhuyse 2006) of the function of the west courts has explored patterns of inter-visibility between the spectators in the court and the people standing in the windows of the west facade of the palace to conclude that the west courts were instrumental in the top-down transmission of political messages, which would help the political elites to legitimise their authority ideologically. As a result, and although the importance of public spaces in Minoan Crete has been well acknowledged and thoroughly studied, especially the relation between the palatial elites and the rest of the people, research tends to concentrate on the palatial and, more generally, authoritative, end of this relation.

The western model concerning the relation between political authority and society

It is pertinent to offer a few overall comments about previous research on Minoan public ritual and other ceremonial activity. The above review has established that the Old Palace period saw an increased emphasis on popular ritual, which rose in parallel with the establishment of the palaces. However, and although the two phenomena seem actually inter-connected, Minoan research has not explored them to the same degree. The palaces have almost monopolised research focus, while the social role of popular ritual in Old Palace Crete has yet to be adequately understood. Several of the interpretations presented above see popular ritual as an elite ideological instrument (e.g. Cherry or Haggis). Others disconnect the two altogether and approach popular ritual from a genre-style descriptive premise, either implicitly (Peatfield) or explicitly (Rutkowski). Diachronic changes in popular ritual are equally problematic. Thus, the passage from Prepalatial popular funerary rites aiming at communal cohesion to the Old Palace public ceremonies, which were presumably instrumental to the elites, is still a gap in our knowledge. Attempts to override this gap either downplay the role of the elites and their asymmetrical relation to the rest of the people (e.g. Hamilakis) or maintain a focus on the top of the social pyramid instead of its dynamic relation to its lower echelons (e.g. Driessen).

The lack of reflection upon popular ritual may be plausibly attributed to the under-theorisation of the notion of the 'popular' or, simply put, what we mean by 'the rest of society' in Minoan Crete. This is in stark contrast to the detailed understanding of, and the plethora of available, alternative, interpretative models about, political authority on Crete. The latter has always been on the top of Minoan research agenda, from the time of Evans to the post-processual and other equally critical approaches, which, as already mentioned above, have either downgraded the political element in the palatial process and/or maintained a focus on power and authority despite their wish for bottom-up understandings of Minoan society.

Traditional approaches allow the assumption that the 'rest of society' was a political body comprehensively constituted and able to operate with a general intellect or collective wish but only in response to the agency of the political authority. The idea of such a 'body politic' may be also implicit in the processual models, which appeared from the early 1970s and mostly after the publication of Colin Renfrew's *Emergence of Civilisation* (1972) until the late 1980s. Paul Halstead's (1988) review of these models demonstrates a common need to understand how the people reacted to the agency of the elites and whether the latter persuaded, tricked or coerced the rest of society. The polarisation between the authority and the people is the result of research insistence upon the identity of the former (e.g. Renfrew's proposal for cunning managers or Halstead's alternative about successful farmers). This insistence has resulted in the detailed circumscription of political authority, which necessitates an equally detailed delineation of its socio-political conlocutor, the rest of society. The implicit identification of the latter with some form of political body stems out of Old Palace Crete being envisaged as a (primary or proto-) state society (Cherry 1986), which is the only type of socio-political organisation that requires a 'body politic' to respond to. The same view on power and people has more recently been re-addressed by Vansteenhuyse and Letesson (2006), who emphasise the emission of political messages by the elites to the people during public gatherings in the west courts of the palaces. This view allows the suggestion that the people were somewhat passive and may be rather characterised as mass. The problem of such identifications lies in the variability of popular forms of ritual activity, which has been reviewed above and which is not explained adequately.

Corporate group models, such as Driessen's house model, avoid the polarisation between the authority and the rest of society and as a result they avoid the pitfall of the body politic, because they place emphasis on horizontal social organization. Nevertheless, they fail to address the phenomena of urban formations, regional sanctuaries and the rather extensive social radius of the palatial phenomenon. In order to avoid an 'either/or' question between corporate groups and wider social formations Schoep and Knappett (2004) have argued that Old Palace Crete may have experienced a dual process of social evolution, with both hierarchical and heterarchical features. Due to such a process and if states existed in Minoan Crete, they were institutions of extensive rather than intensive and thus of loose and contestable control (Damilati and Vavouranakis 2011). It is possible then that Old Palace corporate groups were also embedded in a wider social matrix. For example, and if Driessen's suggestion that the palaces were the result of co-operative agency by several houses is accepted, it is necessary to understand the characteristics of this co-operation, given that it lasted for several centuries and thus attained a stable form for a considerable stretch of time. The conceptualisation of the 'rest of the people' in Old Palace Crete needs to be flexible enough to allow on the one hand the fluid nature of political authority at the time and, on the other hand, the variability of the manifestations of popular agency, such as the peak sanctuaries and the continuing emphasis on funerary food and drink consumption. As a result, any definition that adheres to the body politic or any other organic metaphor implying a hierarchically structured and homogeneous entity should be avoided.

The concept of the multitude

The concept that may prove helpful to the above need is the multitude. It has recently become popular through the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2004: 103-227). The two social thinkers have attempted to understand the current globalised world. The rise of financial corporate groups, such as the international corporations themselves or the so-called 'markets,' have weakened the power of the states and their institutions. Moreover, global financial interests have loosened class structures, since they have been pushing the great mass of the population into a homogenised and proletarian whole, through practices such as nomadic and flexible labour conditions. Hard and Negri note that it is unfeasible to transform the global population into a political body such as 'the people' because the scale of such a project is too large to allow for a global general intellect such as class consciousness to arise. Furthermore, the post-modern world we live in does not encourage the formation and maintenance of greater social frameworks. Rather it promotes their fragmentation.

Hardt and Negri stress that the problem of the globalised world mentioned above hinges upon the inability of traditional thinking to accept that social subjects are multiple entities and thus unable to hold authority. Instead according to the same way of thinking, they must be ruled, because only single entities are rulers, such as the king, the party or the people (and in reference to Minoan Crete the elite or the house). The idea that social agency and the holding of authority require unity has also been tackled by Paolo Virno (2004: 21-43), another social thinker who has worked on the concept of the multitude. Virno criticizes the view that collectivity is a course of convergence from the many individuals to the one body. He argues that becoming One does not have to lead towards the unifying promise of sovereign authority such as the State.

Instead, he emphasises language, intellect and the general faculties of the human condition as a premise for social unity that does not absorb singularity. Virno goes on to suggest that if the general intellect is conceived as public intellect, then it becomes a way of escaping private thinking. It opens each one of us to connect with others and this feature is essential for the maintenance of the multitude. First, it provides stable points of reference, such as the common values and goals that are forged through the public intellect. In addition, it invites new participants, which refresh the network communication and make the multitude expand. Open communication also means that commonality is retained but not reduced to sameness. Individual distinctions are respected and not threatened, since communication always requires two distinct parts, and distinct parts allow different people to pursue the same goals in diverse ways. Furthermore, the commonality of the multitude renders the latter a network of inclusion and not of exclusion, which is usually the basis of social distinction and political authority. As such, the multitude is by definition opposite to centralized authority.

Nonetheless and in order to oppose the latter actively, the members of the multitude need to produce common goods and to focus on a common political project. Hardt and Negri place emphasis on immaterial goods, such as knowledge that may be shared and the very same values and relations that form the communication network of the multitude. This suggestion is reminiscent of Virno's view about the importance of human intellectual faculties. Moreover, the production of common goods on the one hand brings about the multitude and on the other hand it creates contexts outside the exclusive control of sovereign authorities. These contexts inevitably become virtual foci of resistance. Furthermore, the tendency of the multitude toward connectedness and expansion allows the quick spreading of resistance to new and diverse groups and individuals in a piecemeal but effective manner.

Swarm intelligence

Effectiveness is achieved through the coordination of the different members of the multitude, which do not have to conform to a single way of thinking. The multitude employs swarm intelligence (Kennedy et al. 2001). The latter describes the collective intelligence of ants, bees, flocks of birds, but also of groups of people. It starts from the premise that intelligence is the ability to optimize behaviour in order to overcome environmental constraints in a trial and error manner. It follows that aggregations of individuals mean that more trials and errors happen within the same stretch of time and thus statistical probabilities to achieve the goal augment significantly. Furthermore, the communication between the members of the swarm means that each member learns by observing and coming into contact with others. The aims of swarms are usually simple but complex collective behaviours with concrete results may be produced through the combination of simple acts, provided that all members follow a few basic rules of conduct. Ant and bee colonies are typical such examples.

In order to apply this approach to human societies, Kennedy, Eberhart and Shi (2001: 94-114) argue that human intelligence does not rely so much on the inner cognitive procession of information, but, rather, on sociality, which promotes the exchange of information and enhances the ability to form new and elaborate concepts in order to get in touch with others. John Barrett (2013) has reached a similar argument about the evolution of human cognition in early Prehistory. He has argued that the human mind did not evolve because people were able to 'download' and store information outside the human brain into material media, such as rock art or, later, written records. Rather, social relations operated as a storage medium for knowledge. This knowledge was recalled and re-appropriated every time a social relation was enacted in practice.

These suggestions converge at the importance of social relations in augmenting and enhancing human cognition and the effectiveness of human agency. They also point out that it is possible for people to coordinate their actions without losing their individuality. Hardt and Negri bring about the example of the 'White Overalls,' a group of young unemployed people in Italy, who have organized protests in their homeland, but they have also participated in the Zapatistas movement in the Seattle protests in 1999 and finally in the Genoa G-8 protests in 2001. They were a group that would form out of and re-dissolve into thin air. The importance of the White overalls as leader of the multitude lies in 'their network organization, spatial mobility, and temporal flexibility, which facilitated the organization of a coherent political force against the new global system of power' (Hardt and Negri 2004: 266-267).

The multitude before the establishment of the modern nation-state

Although discussion about the multitude is focused on the current reality, the ideas just set out are pertinent to the basic tendency of the human condition towards social life. In this respect, the importance of common knowledge, values and ways of life may be explored with reference to past societies, too. Indeed, Virno and Hardt and Negri admit that they have borrowed the multitude from the philosophical and political thought of the 17th century and more specifically, from the writings of Baruch Spinoza and Thomas Hobbes. Virno (2004: 21-23) explains that Spinoza defined the 'multitudo' as a plurality that persists and is able to act in both a political and collective manner. It has remarkable coherence but it does not reduce the value of its constituent parts into a hierarchical structure.

Furthermore, Spinoza (2004 [1670-1677]) saw the multitude as an entity eager to expand its power until it embraces the totality of society. Thomas Hobbes (2005 [1651]) agreed on this but saw eagerness as greediness. Hobbes prioritized the emergence of the single sovereign ruler as a way to tame the difficult human nature. For Hobbes the multitude had negative connotations. It belonged to a state of social being before the state and its order, in nature and its chaos. As Virno notes again, Hobbes thought that the multitude presented a challenge to political unity, resistance to authority and an active resistance to the transference of natural rights on to the sovereign leader(s), through the very composition and behaviour of such an entity.

The multitude in Minoan Crete

Spinoza and Hobbes lived and wrote at a time when the modern – and essentially nation – state was still fluid and under formation. For this reason, it is possible to examine the applicability of the concept of the multitude to Minoan Crete, because and as already noted, the emergence of the palaces marked the establishment of a fluid and flexible set of social and political institutions. Notwithstanding the great differences between the two socio-historical contexts of the Prehistoric Aegean and early modern Europe, the period before the Thirty Years' War featured a fluid mosaic of monarchies, republics, empires and most indicatively, the Holy Roman Empire in Germany, with its many principalities, duchies and free cities.

This mosaic is not incompatible with the establishment of several palaces in central Crete, their co-existence with non-palatial towns in east Crete and the parallel establishment of a-typical palatial forms, such as Monastiraki. In the same vein, palaces required a socio-political conlocutor organized at a similar geographical scale to their regional radius of influence. The proliferation of urban centres in the Old Palace period demonstrates that such social organization had indeed been reached. The fact that not all of these urban centres featured palaces, especially the ones in east Crete, suggests a significant degree of organizational diversity beyond the reach of central institutions, which fits easily within the concept of the multitude.

Another Old Palace feature that evokes the same concept is the balance between individuality and collectivity. Such balance is observed in the growing popularity of seals from the late Prepalatial through to the Old Palace period, which indicates that individual identities were preserved and not subsumed by collective modes of sociality. The emergence of the cup, a shape for individual consumption, as the key element of commensal occasions is equally telling. For example, the significant variety of motifs on the decorated cups at Lakkos, Petras, in east Crete suggests horizontal social differentiations. Vertical structures at Petras are instead assumed to have hinged upon the standardization of the production of polychrome pottery (Haggis 2007: 755-762). Nonetheless, similar levels of standardisation had been reached in Prepalatial Mesara, a place, which then saw the establishment of a palace at Phaistos and thus some form of vertical social structuring (Todaro 2013: 231-240). Standardization then may be reflecting social cohesion rather than differentiation. Indeed, the ability of the MM users of tholos tomb B at Apesokari, a community peripheral to the palatial centre of Phaistos, to consume Kamares ware (Figure 3) further corroborates the idea that standardized pottery production and variability in decoration may be actually pointing towards the emergence of the multitude rather than the institutionalization of social hierarchy.

The latter may only be observed in the main palatial centres of central Crete. Thus, Old Palace assemblages at Knossos feature a low ratio of decorated cups and a high ratio of undecorated ones (Macdonald and Knappett 2007: 163-165). Such difference may be taken to reflect the wish of specific individuals to set themselves apart from the rest of the social group. A similar pattern has been argued for late Prepalatial Phaistos, where the emergence of the plain conical cup as the main and widely used drinking vessel is counterpointed by restricted assemblages of decorated tableware (Todaro 2013: 199, 264). However, and beyond the strict sphere of the palace centres, there is more evidence to support the wish of the multitude to expand its power. Such evidence is the guarded road network in far east Crete, which remained away from any palatial influence (Tzedakis et al. 1989). The only explanation for the construction and maintenance of such a network is the collaboration between different urban centres, such as Zakros and Palaikastro. A similar network, not of roads but of beacons is argued to have existed in Pediada, south of Knossos. It has been assumed that this network was created under the auspices of a sovereign authority (Panagiotakis et al. 2013), but the evidence from east Crete contradicts this view and allows the suggestion that the beacon network was also a work by a multitude.

Popular ritual and the multitude in Middle Minoan Crete

The spreading of popular cult and of other ritual practices in the Old Palace period may also be considered as a sign of the emergence of the multitude. The fact that different arenas for public ceremonies appeared at about the same time agrees with the idea that the multitude creates different focal points, each of which is discrete and independent of the others, but at the same time one affects the other. The delicate balance between similarity and diversity within a single ritual arena is also telling. Peak sanctuaries are the best example of this balance. They all share a set of common features, such as elevation, the general

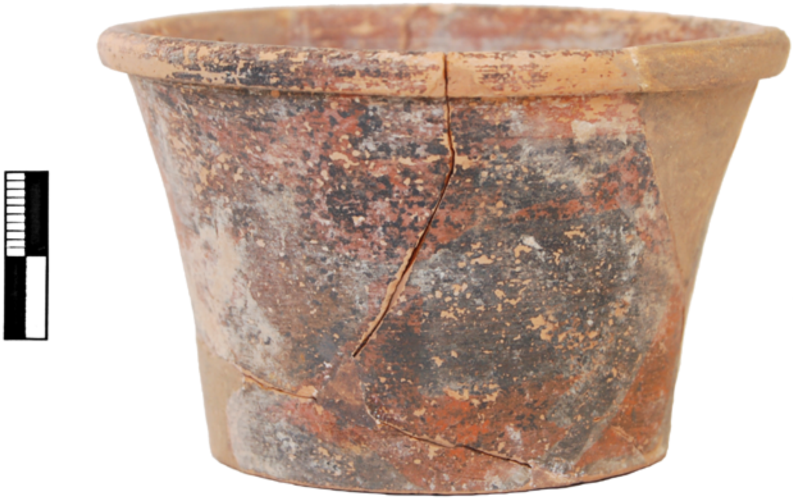

Figure 3: A Kamares ware drinking vessel from tholos tomb B at Apesokari (photo: Michael Zoitopoulos).

lack of architectural features, and visual connection with other peak sanctuaries. However, each one is distinct. The artefacts found deposited at these sites present several similarities, such as the bull figurines or the figurines of boxers and other anthropomorphic figurines. Nonetheless and at the same time, each assemblage is unique, and it has been suggested that each peak sanctuary acquired its own material, ritual and social identity on the basis of the specific votive items it attracted (Jones 1999; see also Haysom, this volume).

Several features of the Old Palace funerary record may also be better understood than before through the emergence of the multitude. For example, the importance of the cup as a consumption vessel in ritual acts has already been mentioned with regard to tholos B at Apesokari. Burial Building 6 at Archanes-Phourni may be added as an extra example (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 202-206). The treatment of the dead within Old Palace burial customs may provide further food for thought (review and bibliography in Legarra Herrero 2014). Body handling techniques mostly follow late Prepalatial trends and include the formation of ossuary spaces, such as the pit outside tholos B at Moni Odigitria (Branigan, 2010: 252), Kamilari (Girella 2013) and tholos B at Apesokari. Unfortunately, only the first of the three tholoi has been excavated recently, but the results are rather informative. Skulls and long bones had been grouped together, a fact which also points towards a balance between the retention of individuality and the collectivization of the dead. A similar effect was reached through the many individual pithos burials that were, nonetheless, from Pacheia Ammos (Seager 1916) and Sphoungaras (Hall 1912).

It might be counter-argued that secondary burial practices had existed since the early Prepalatial and, in this respect, late Prepalatial and Old Palace practices should not strike either as exceptional or as particularly telling. However, early Prepalatial funerary customs also included the frequent cleaning of the tombs and thus the destruction of old burial remains or their casual disposal at specific areas, such as the Area of the Rocks at Archanes Phourni (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 232-237). In the late Prepalatial and the Old Palace period, the skeletal material is preserved to a significant higher degree and it becomes materially a lot more visible than before. For example, Agios Charalambos is an example of a rock shelter exclusively devoted to secondary burial (Betancourt 2014). The great building expansion at Archanes Phourni in the Old Palace period (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 244) is also related to a need to preserve old burials. All these practices inevitably resulted in the retention of the personal identity of each of the dead or, at least, part of it.

Reconsidering social organization in the Old Palace period

The appreciation of the multitude and its active presence in social life through ceremonies with wide public or popular participation offers a renewed view of Old Palace Crete. This view emphasizes that the palatial transformation may have been the result of the wider tendency of Minoan society to become better connected in order to strengthen the relations of conviviality, which had characterized the Prepalatial period (Borgna 2004). Such strengthening entailed the reconfiguration of social relations at a larger geographical scale, which allowed Minoan society to expand its ability to act in an integrated manner beyond the limits of the relatively small and dispersed Prepalatial communities. The reasons for such a transformation are beyond the scope of this paper, but it may reasonably be suggested that they may be related to the cessation of imports in EM IIB, and the consequent focus of Crete on a model of economy that combined agropastoral and local craft activities. Such a shift may have triggered the need for internal markets and thus regional social relations that would channel economic interests. The spreading of popular ritual in the Old Palace period both expressed and materialized this tendency (on this see also Anderson 2016).

This view constitutes a significant departure from traditional notions of social transformation, which usually assume a specific force, usually an exclusive social group of elevated status, namely an elite who drives change and manages to take the rest of society with it. The alternative suggestion about Old Palace Crete and empowered corporate groups becomes embedded in a matrix of wider social transformation and their emergence is hence better understood as part of a growth in scale and a consequent institutionalization of pre-existing forms of social organization, such as the 'house(-hold).' The narrative proposed here decentralizes the palaces from the process of the transformation of Minoan society. Instead, they may be seen as a reaction towards a vertical restructuring of Minoan society against an otherwise widespread ethos of conviviality and horizontal social organization that had been prevailing. This reaction may be justifiably identified with centres that featured a long history, such as Knossos and Phaistos. The latter had been occupied since the Neolithic and had almost immediately developed a wide radius of influence. As a result, the emergence of the multitude provided a serious challenge to their traditional role as regional nodes of the social web.

The above thoughts should not be taken to reiterate the traditional binary opposition between elites and the rest of the people. Although such a reiteration would follow Thomas Hobbes' reasoning that sovereign authority is counter to the multitude, the paper does not share his view that sovereign power is the inevitable champion of social order and that the imposition of its top down order is against the chaos of the multitude and its greediness for power. This paper wishes to overcome similar dualisms and has employed the concept of the multitude in an inclusive manner, without assuming that its emergence flattened social differentiation, since peak sanctuaries did not exclude elite participation. The multitude then may have incorporated the elites in it as well as other types of social distinction within the wider matrix of the Old Palace regional integration of Cretan societies as a whole.

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What relationship with the First palace of Phaistos? The funerary complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada in the Protopalatial period

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Introduction

From an archaeological perspective, it is often difficult to recognize and distinguish what is 'elite' from what is 'popular', and largely depends on our interpretation. Since, in this paper, I shall deal with the Western Mesara plain (South-central Crete) in the Protopalatial period, corresponding to the 20-17th cent. BC, my work is facilitated by the presence of the palatial site of Phaistos. Although the palatial elites of Phaistos are still far from being well defined (Schoep *et al.* 2012), I shall here consider 'elite' whatever is physically related to the First (Protopalatial) palace of Phaistos and, specifically, what is performed within the areas of the palace, and 'popular', whatever is outside the palace, focusing mostly on the funerary realm rather than settlement remains.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the relationship between the First palace of Phaistos and the mortuary landscape in the Western Mesara plain, attempting to document the changes that occurred throughout the three phases of the Protopalatial period, MM IB, MM IIA, MM IIB. I concentrate on the ritual practices attested in the *tholos* tomb cemeteries of Kamilari and Ayia Triada for the following reasons: firstly, they have been recently re-studied, in particular Kamilari by Girella (2011, 2013) and by myself (2009b, 2011a see also Girella and Caloi forth.), and Ayia Triada by Cultraro (2000, 2003), Carinci (2003, 2004) and Aluia (2011); secondly, both the cemeteries are the only funerary complexes of Western Mesara to provide an ex-novo foundation of *tholos* tombs in MM IB, that is contemporary with the construction of the First palace of Phaistos; and thirdly, both cemeteries are quite close to the palace of Phaistos, thus allowing us to analyse their relationship with the palatial elite(s) in depth.

It is argued that the monumental *tholos* tombs founded at Kamilari and Ayia Triada in MM IB represent a reaction to the construction of the new, monumental, and innovative First palace of Phaistos. The MM IB ceramic evidence from the two cemeteries of Kamilari and Ayia Triada corroborates this hypothesis, as it reflects the performance of ritual activities that are different from those attested at the palace itself (see *infra*). Only from MM IIA does the ceramic evidence from Kamilari reveal the first change in ritual behaviours, probably due to the adoption of the same consumption forms as in the Phaistian palace. It is argued that this change in ritual behaviours attested at Kamilari reflects some transformations of socio-political dynamics of the Western Mesara plain, which originate from the MM II consolidation and growth of the Phaistos palace.

In the following pages, I first present a brief introduction to Phaistos and its surroundings in the Protopalatial period, then focus on the two main cemeteries of Kamilari and Ayia Triada, and finally turn my attention to the discussion of the relationship of the First palace of Phaistos with these funerary complexes throughout the Protopalatial period.

The palace of Phaistos in the Western Mesara plain in the Protopalatial period: an overview

Recent studies have confirmed that the First palace of Phaistos was founded in MM IB (Carinci and La Rosa 2007). Besides the South-West building with its orthostate façade and its related Lower West Court (*Piazzale* LXX), the North-West building (La Rosa 2004: 627), the paved Middle West Court (*Piazzale* I) and the Central Court (Cortile 40; Carinci and La Rosa 2007) were also built in MM IB. Although in MM IB the strongest investment is on the South-West building, new investment is also attested in the town area, where new buildings were constructed to the West of the West Court, on the slopes of the palace hill, namely the Chàlara quarter and Ayia Photeini, as well as on the slopes of the nearby hill known as *Acropoli Mediana*. As far as the westernmost hill of the town, Christos Effendi, is concerned, the 2007-2013 Italian-Greek survey has revealed that also this hill was occupied since the beginning of the Protopalatial period (Todaro 2015).

As discussed elsewhere (Caloi 2015b), despite the existence of several factors which speak in favour of continuity from the late Prepalatial to the Protopalatial periods (Todaro 2012; Whitelaw 2012), the discontinuity of the MM IB phase in the Western Mesara plain is evident in the new investments which characterise both Phaistos and its surrounding territory. It is demonstrated by the foundation of the settlements at Kommos (Betancourt 1990) and Ayia Triada (Carinci 2003). At Kommos we observe an important increase in pottery depositions compared with the previous period (i.e. MM IA), as well as some architectural remains datable to MM IB (Wright 1996; Betancourt 1990; Van de Moortel 2006). At Ayia Triada, a new settlement was founded in MM IB, which is not a continuation of the EM II occupation (La Rosa 1977, 1979-1980; Carinci 1999, 2003). Likewise, in MM IB, the ex-novo foundation of the Kamilari cemetery (Levi 1961-1962; Caloi 2009b, 2011a) and the construction of a second *tholos* tomb at Ayia Triada, i.e. *Tholos* B, take place (Carinci 2003, 2004; see *infra*), as well as an exponential increase in the use of the Kamares Cave (Van de Moortel 2011). Furthermore, the survey conducted by Watrous and colleagues in the 'Phaistos plain' has also revealed an increase in number of new sites in MM IB (Watrous *et al.* 2004: 40).

Although the new investment in the centre of Phaistos is mirrored at neighbouring sites, the distinctiveness of the Phaistos palace is displayed in its material culture, both in architecture and in pottery (see *infra*). From a ceramic perspective, from MM IB, Phaistos presents new wares, shapes and decorative forms, displaying a new impetus in terms of innovation and artistic experimentation (Caloi 2013). From MM IB, we observe a new and important sharing of pottery between Phaistos and most of the sites surrounding it. Indeed, the settlements of Kommos and Ayia Triada, as well as the Kamares Cave, have produced pottery that is absolutely identical and/or imitative of the contemporary Phaistian pottery (Levi and Carinci 1988; Carinci 2003; Van de Moortel 2006), whereas Phaistos maintains its role as leader of ceramic innovation throughout the Protopalatial period (Caloi 2007, 2013).

At MM IB Phaistos, among the new shapes, the most representative form is the globular open-spouted jar, which is often associated with handleless conical cups, forming the typical drinking set. In fact, at MM IB Phaistos, large fills containing globular open-spouted jars in association with large amounts of handleless conical cups have been retrieved to the West of the West Court. These fills have been interpreted as evidence for the episodic dumping of pottery used in ceremonial activities performed in the nearby Middle West Court (Caloi 2013). It is remarkable to observe that in MM IB the globular open-spouted jar is not well attested outside the Phaistos town in the peripheral quarters of Chàlara and Ayia Photeini (Caloi 2007, 2013), nor in the nearby settlements of Kommos and Ayia Triada. In fact, although in the MM IB phase, the Kommos and Ayia Triada settlements share the same ceramic production as Phaistos (Carinci 1999; Van de Moortel 2006), at these sites the MM IB globular-open spouted jar is barely attested. As we will see later, in MM IB the globular open-spouted jar is not attested in either the necropolis of Kamilari or the funerary complex of Ayia Triada, where the best represented form is the jug. By contrast, it is present at the Kamares Cave (Dawkins and Laistner 1912-1913: fig. 3, pls. V-VI; Van de Moortel 2011), where it is attested with several specimens all displaying the same decorative forms found on Phaistian products (Caloi 2013: 252). This suggests a scenario where, in MM IB at the Phaistos palace, there occurred some communal ritual activities involving specific vases, such as the globular open-spouted jars, which are exclusive to the palatial site. Moreover, the ceramic evidence speaks in favour of a special relationship between the Kamares Cave and Phaistos since the beginning of MM IB (Van de Moortel 2011; Caloi 2013).

During the MM II phase, the site of Phaistos continues its process of monumentalisation, already started in MM IB. In MM IIA, the first architectural changes are visible in the South-West building, which was remodelled; new entrances were opened and the circulation pattern of the building was changed (Carinci 2011; Caloi 2012, 2015b). Moreover, in MM IIA, new wares appear, as well as new shapes imitating metallic prototypes and displaying innovative decoration forms (Caloi 2011c, 2013). Although the MM IIA phase is not well known in the other sites of the Western Mesara plain, from recent publications it seems that both at Kommos and in the Kamares Cave, there was an increase in pottery depositions (Van de Moortel 2006, 2011). As far as the settlement of Ayia Triada is concerned, the scanty structures and scarce quantity of pottery dating to MM IIA, make it difficult to define the pattern of the site in this phase.

The most remarkable change in the Western Mesara plain occurred in MM IIB, when the palace of Phaistos reached the conclusion of its process of monumentalisation. The most important works of renovation took place in the South-West building (Carinci 2011) and in the Middle West Court (*Piazzale* I), with the addition of a new orthostate façade to the North-West building and the construction of the *kouloures*, of the theatral area, etc. (Carinci and La Rosa 2007; Carinci 2011). In MM IIB, new buildings were also constructed in the Phaistos town, and especially to the West of the West Court, to the South of the South-West building, to the South of the ramp connecting the Lower with the Middle West Court, and on the southern slopes of the *Acropoli Mediana*.

Contemporary with the monumentalisation and expansion of Phaistos, important investment is visible in other settlements of the Western Mesara plain, mostly at Kommos and Ayia Triada. At Kommos from MM IIA to MM IIB a new monumental building, known as Building AA, is constructed (Van de Moortel 2006; Caloi 2013: 43), while at Ayia Triada the strong increase in pottery depositions of MM IIB and their distribution suggest that during this phase the settlement expanded to the North/North-East (Carinci 1999; see also Baldacci 2013). As we will see later, when the settlement started to grow, the funerary area was already in decline, while a new investment is visible between the settlement and the necropolis (see *infra*). Also, the Kamares Cave is characterised by an important increase in pottery depositions during MM II. Of special note in MM IIB are some peculiar vessels, like the *stamnoid* jars, which are otherwise only found at the palatial site of Phaistos, suggesting that the relationship of the Kamares Cave with Phaistos remained exclusive in MM IIB (Van de Moortel 2011).

From a ceramic perspective, it is evident that from MM IIB the ceramics attested at the settlements of Ayia Triada and Kommos, as well as at the Kamares Cave, display the same shapes, forms and decorative forms as Phaistos. As discussed in more detail below, the Kamilari necropolis also started to adopt the same pottery and thus the same forms of consumption as Phaistos in MM II (see *infra*).

Without dwelling upon the main agents of the changes that occurred at the MM IIB Phaistos palace (Caloi 2015b), it is relevant to note here that in the MM IIB phase the material culture of the Western Mesara plain is much more standardised than before. Although the sites surrounding Phaistos had the same pottery as Phaistos, nonetheless, the palace maintained its distinctiveness in pottery production, attested by some peculiar and elaborate vases (i.e. fruit-stands, graters, filters, serving vessels, etc.) that seem only to be found at Phaistos (Van de Moortel 2006, Caloi 2013) and are most likely connected to the performance of ritual activities which took place only in the palatial centre.

The Kamilari cemetery from MM IB to MM IIB: changes in ritual behaviours

My recent analysis of the MM IB-MM IIB pottery retrieved from the funerary complex of Kamilari (Caloi 2009b, 2011a, 2015a), allowed me to confirm that the cemetery was constructed in MM IB (see now Girella and Caloi forth.). It then went on to be used until LM IIIA2 (Girella 2011, 2013), with further re-occupation in the Geometric period (Lefèvre-Novaro 2004). A possible settlement for the Kamilari cemetery was identified during the Western Mesara survey (Watrous *et al.* 2004), but only a few structures were recognised.

The original nucleus of Kamilari consists of the circular room, the antechamber α, located outside the entrance on the eastern side, the contiguous room β, whose function in MM IB is not known; to the North there is the courtyard, bounded on its north-western part by a *peribolos* wall and communicating with the antechamber through an opening in the southern wall of the room (Caloi 2011a: 99, fig.1). In MM IB, no rooms were found for the disposal of the skeletal material. Since the small amount of MM IB ceramic material retrieved from inside the circular funerary room was found against its western wall, it is likely that when the room was cleaned, the skeletal material also was pushed towards the periphery of the *tholos* interior.

For MM IB the ceramic evidence comprises only 17 diagnostic vases: only two MM IB beaked jugs have been recovered from inside the funerary room, while the majority of the MM IB pottery was found outside the *tholos*. Most of the complete vases were retrieved from a specific area of the courtyard, that is the north-western area (Caloi 2011a: pl. XXXIIIa). They mostly include pouring vessels, such as medium-sized beaked jugs and small *askoid* jugs (Caloi 2011a: pl. XXXIIIb). From Kamilari no traces of food were retrieved, although the latter is a difficult category of material to preserve, and no evidence is offered by pottery and other implements associated with food and drink consumption. Indeed, in MM IB no cooking pots, no bowls and only two fragmentary drinking vessels are attested, while most of pottery consists of jugs. The overwhelming presence of jugs suggests that ritual activities were mainly based on pouring actions and/or libations rather than on liquid consumption. From the quantity and the distribution of the ceramic material, it seems that in MM IB the ritual activities were not large-scale ceremonies involving drink and food consumption as attested in the MM IA cemeteries, such as Moni Odighitria (Vasilakis and Branigan 2010), Platanos and Koumasa (Xanthoudides 1971 [1924]; Legarra Herrero 2011). By contrast, it appears that the rituals were restricted to few people, limited to the north-western part of the courtyard, where most of the MM IB material was found, and most likely focused on pouring actions and/or libations (Caloi 2015a).

At MM IB Kamilari, the great amount of work involved in the construction of the monumental tomb does not correspond to the evidence for a strong use of the funerary circular room, which appears to be limited. Although it is clear that much MM IB pottery from inside the *tholos* tomb was probably removed during cleaning operations, the ceramic evidence from the funerary circular room is scanty indeed. It seems that in MM IB the *tholos* tomb was not the focus of the ritual activities, which were instead performed in the courtyard (Caloi 2009b, 2011a). It is also evident that the cemetery was not used on a large-scale compared with the stronger evidence of use in the succeeding Protopalatial and Neopalatial phases (i.e. MM IIB-MM III).

By MM IIA, the funerary evidence at Kamilari reveals certain changes from MM IB. First of all, the quantity and the wider distribution of the pottery inside the necropolis suggest an increase in the use of the cemetery. We mostly observe an increase in drinking cups and the appearance of a new pouring vessel, the bridge-spouted jar, which is well attested at Phaistos (Caloi 2009b, 2011a). Among the new forms attested at Kamilari from MM IIA onwards, are bridge-spouted jars, and plain handleless and fine carinated cups. In particular, some MM IIA bridge-spouted jars display innovative decoration, consisting of impressed and incised motifs, which reproduce the decoration of metallic prototypes (Caloi 2009b: 859, 900, pls. 31, 33). The appearance at Kamilari of new forms with impressed or incised decorations, and the occurrence of particular handles imitating metalwork, indicates that it followed the trend attested at Phaistos from MM IIA (Caloi 2009a: 420-427, figs. 14-16). Moreover, the association of bridge-spouted jars with drinking vessels, suggests the introduction of new forms of ritual, no longer based on pouring actions, but mainly on liquid consumption (Caloi 2011a).

In MM IIB the Kamilari funerary complex changes its pattern radically. Firstly, we observe a strong increase in the use of the cemetery, attested by the foundation of a new *tholos* tomb, known as Mylona Lakko (Levi 1961-1962), by the explosion in the quantities of ceramic material, and by the expansion of the occupied areas towards the East (Caloi 2011a). Most of MM IIB ceramic material from Kamilari was found in the courtyard, and especially in its north-western part, near the entrance to the antechamber α. This is mainly composed of drinking vessels, mostly plain handleless and fine carinated cups, and of pouring vessels, such as beaked jugs, bridge-spouted jars, and side-spouted jars (Caloi 2009b). In MM IIB, the increase in the use of drinking vessels, twice as many as the pouring vessels, argues for the performance of rituals that mostly comprise liquid consumption. Since most of the vases from the courtyard were retrieved near the entrance to the antechamber, it seems likely that they were used for mortuary feasting on the occasion of funerary rituals.

Secondly, from MM IIB, new ossuaries were established in the form of rooms β and δ. Here, new ritual activities connected with the relocation of bones are attested by the presence of handleless conical cups and stone vases, found either in association with long bones and pieces of skulls, or placed in row, inverted on the ground (Caloi 2011a: pl. XXXIV; 2011b: 138-139, fig. 2).

Finally, in MM IIB, the cemetery was equipped with a slab altar to the South of room β, where also some inverted handleless conical cups and stone vases were recovered. This suggests the performance of some ceremonies more connected with non-funerary rituals, most likely in honour of dead ancestors, rather than with specific funerary occasions. In contrast to the previous phases, in MM IIB, the Kamilari cemetery shows a new emphasis upon the secondary treatment of the dead, which can be interpreted as a stronger interest in the process of remembering/worshipping dead ancestors (Caloi 2011a, 2015a).

In conclusion as regards MM IIB, the evidence provided by the Kamilari cemetery suggests a spatial and functional differentiation of the areas outside the tomb: there are areas used mostly for mortuary feasting, such as the north-western part of the courtyard, and areas used mainly for non-funerary activities, like the southern part of the courtyard equipped with the altar. Comparing Kamilari with the other Mesara tholos tombs, it seems evident that Kamilari is one of the few funerary complexes still in use in MM IIB, being used both as burial place and a focus for ancestor worship; by contrast, most of Mesara *tholos* tombs went out of use as burial places during MM IB and were thereafter only sporadically used as cult places (Caloi 2011b, 2015a).

Ayia Triada cemetery from MM IB to MM IIB: from the *akmè* to the decline

At Ayia Triada, MM IB saw the foundation of a new *tholos* tomb, *tholos* B. Besides *tholos* B, the archaeological evidence shows that *tholos* A, founded in EM II, continued to be used in a limited way in MM IB (Carinci 2003, 2004), together with some annexes located to the South and known as the *Camerette*. The latter were used from MM IA until the end of MM IB, not for burials but more probably as pottery repositories (Cultraro 2000). In fact, no skeletal material was retrieved from them, but only large amounts of pottery. In MM IB, *tholos* tombs A and B were both in use, but they contained only few vases, with the best evidence of MM IB coming from the *Camerette.* The *Camerette* produced much more MM IB ceramic material, including a large number of *barbotine* jugs. These elaborate jugs with painted and relief decoration are represented by more than 70 specimens (Cultraro 2000).

As pointed out by Carinci (2003, 2004), at Ayia Triada there was a marked change in funerary rituals from MM IA to MM IB. Indeed, in MM IA, *tholos* A and its annexes to the East were used intensively for ceremonial activity involving drink and food consumption by large numbers of people. By contrast, in MM IB, the ritual activities seem to be limited to fewer people and did not involve food consumption. It is relevant to observe that in MM IB Ayia Triada, the increase in monumentality of the cemetery does not correspond to intensive occupation in the settlement, which has revealed few structures dating to that period (La Rosa 1977, 1979-1980) and also few MM IB ceramic deposits (Carinci 2003). From the pottery record, it appears that from MM IIA the Ayia Triada cemetery begins to decline. From the publications of Banti, and Cultraro, both *tholoi* A and B yielded only few vases which could be dated to MM IIA (Banti 1930-1931; Cultraro 2003: 317, fig. 17; Paribeni 1904: pl. XLII, 4 and pl. XLIII, 1-2). Furthermore, the *Camerette* had already gone out of use.

In MM IIB, the cemetery of Ayia Triada seems not to have been used, although a few vessels were found belonging to the last depositions of *tholos* A. These vessels, published by Cultraro (2003) as MM IIA, may actually date to final MM IIB, moving the last depositions of *tholos* A to the MM IIB phase. They consist of five vases, both pouring vessels and containers (Cultraro 2003: 317, figs. 17-19), which find good correlations with MM IIB vases retrieved from the destruction levels of the Palace of Phaistos (Caloi 2009b: 309). If these few vessels are to be dated to final MM IIB, it is likely that they could represent a final use of *tholos* tomb A, which can be interpreted as a cult activity.

In MM IIB a new investment of labour is visible in the area between the settlement and the cemetery, which went through several transformations. To the West of the *Camerette*, a new paved rectangular space was constructed, in the centre of which the excavator found a rectangular stone with small hollows (La Rosa 2001: pl. LXXIVe-f), which could be an offering table (*kernos*?). This space was interpreted by La Rosa (2001: 225) as a sacred and public space, while, in my opinion, it could rather be specifically linked to the worship of the ancestors buried in the then disused funerary area. I wonder whether the last deposition of *tholos* A and the transformation that occurred in this border area are both connected with the conversion of the funerary complex from a burial place into a cult place. I have proposed elsewhere (Caloi 2016) that the new burial place of the Ayia Triada community could have been moved to the nearby cemetery of Kamilari, which expanded precisely in MM IIB.

The Phaistos palace and the relationship with the funerary complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada: further thoughts

In MM IB the foundation of the palace of Phaistos with its monumental South-West building is contemporary with new construction in the Phaistos town and the surrounding territory, where we observe an increase in the number of ex-novo foundations. Nonetheless the monumental leap that occurs at Phaistos in MM IB finds a counterpart mainly in the funerary realm. A new investment in monumental structures is evident mostly at Kamilari and at Ayia Triada with the construction of the main *tholos* tomb and of *tholos* B respectively, whereas in the new settlements of Kommos and Ayia Triada, only ceramic deposits and very few structures can be attributed to MM IB. Despite the construction of a new monumental tomb, in both cemeteries the *tholos* tombs seem to be scantily used in this phase. Indeed, the mortuary area is not only separated from the area of the ritual activities, but yielded little evidence of use, as the emphasis is on the ritual activities performed respectively in the courtyard at Kamilari and in the area of *Camerette* at Ayia Triada. Moreover, the ritual activities are no longer based on large-scale food and drink consumption as in Prepalatial times, but rather on pouring actions as testified by the numerous jugs found in both the cemeteries. It is remarkable to observe that the ritual behaviours performed in these two cemeteries are not attested in the Phaistos Palace. As already stated, although it is evident that the area surrounding Phaistos shared the same ceramic production as the palace, nevertheless, it seems clear that ritual activities attested in MM IB in the palace are different from those attested in the nearby funerary complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada. While at MM IB Phaistos the ceremonies are based on drink consumption, involving large quantities of people using mostly globular open-spouted jars and handleless conical cups, at Kamilari and Ayia Triada the almost exclusive presence of jugs suggests that the ritual activities focused on pouring actions.

From the ceramic evidence, it seems therefore clear that the ritual activities attested in both cemeteries in MM IB are not in line either with the funerary activities of the previous period (i.e. MM IA) or with the communal ceremonies performed in the MM IB Phaistos palace, which were both based on drink and food consumption. It appears that the ritual behaviours attested both at Kamilari and Ayia Triada in MM IB could represent the outcome of a more popular tradition, i.e. ‘popular rites’, which are shared at the local level, contrasting markedly with the elite ceremonies of the communal areas of the Phaistos palace that were performed by local and/or regional elites.

Moreover, since the monumental tombs of Kamilari and Ayia Triada were constructed but scantily used, showing that a strong investment in labour did not correspond to an intensive use of the mortuary areas, I wonder whether in MM IB, through the foundation of a monumental *tholos* tomb the communities of Kamilari and Ayia Triada respectively chose to create a new marker, using their cemeteries more as ritual foci rather than as burial places. The leap to monumentality demonstrated by the construction of the two *tholos* tombs of Kamilari and Ayia Triada could indeed represent a local statement in the face of the construction of the new, monumental, palatial building of Phaistos, with its innovative orthostate façade.

If the Phaistos palace was the result of a collective action driven by local and/or regional elites who decided to invest in the construction of a monumental building devoted to the preparation/performance of communal rituals (for a review of various interpretations of the same phenomenon see papers in Schoep *et al.* 2012; also Caloi 2015b; Driessen 2018), I wonder whether the communities investing in the funerary complexes of Kamilari and Ayia Triada respectively were rather less involved in this Phaistian project (Caloi 2015b). From MM IIA the first changes are visible in both the necropoleis: at Kamilari the funerary area displays an increase in its use and reveals the first changes in material culture, while Ayia Triada begins its decline as funerary area. We have already observed that contemporary with the decline of the cemetery, at MM IIB Ayia Triada, there is a major investment in the area between the settlement and the necropolis, most likely in connection with the transformation of the cemetery into a cult place.

By contrast, in MM IIB Kamilari becomes an important cemetery, provided with another *tholos* tomb (i.e. Mylona Lakko) and two ossuaries. Moreover, we have already observed that from MM IIA drinking and pouring vessels that are typical of the nearby Phaistos palace were introduced at Kamilari. The adoption at Kamilari of the ceremonial sets used at Phaistos may signify a social strategy of imitation and emulation of ritual performances based on drink consumption which were acted out in the communal areas of the palace by palatial elites. This, in turn, may reflect new needs of the Kamilari community to evoke elite feasting, in order to display its membership of a much wider elite community. From MM IIA it seems that Kamilari was integrated into a new system defining a regional entity, probably focused on Phaistos, which seems to have played a new role.

Based on the ceramic evidence, I wonder whether as early as MM IIA, and not just in MM IIB, the Phaistos palace begins to play a key role in legitimising that regional integration which implies 'the reorganisation of a region into a subordinate hinterland by a palatial centre' (Schoep and Tomkins 2012: 23). Indeed, the MM II process of monumentalisation of the Phaistos palace increased its impact on the wider Mesara plain and influenced many aspects of the material culture of its neighbouring sites (Sbonias 2012; Todaro 2012; Caloi 2015b). In particular, concerning the necropolis of Kamilari, it seems that the 'popular rites' performed there in MM IB, and mainly based on pouring actions, in MM IIA gave way to new rituals which imitated the forms of consumption performed at Phaistos by the palatial elites. This change seems to convey the new integration of the Kamilari community into the much stronger MM II palatial system.

Although the settlement and funerary evidence of the Western Mesara region is still far from being well defined, these changes integrate new evidence into the discussion of socio-political development of the Western Mesara throughout the Protopalatial period, shedding new light on the varying role played by the Phaistos palace from the beginning to the end of the period.

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Mass and elite in Minoan peak sanctuaries

Matthew Haysom

Introduction

Two parallel visions of the nature of cult at peak sanctuaries have long co-existed within Minoan studies. One, gives to these sites a rustic and folksy air, regarding them as popular cult places frequented by pastoralists and farmers. The other, places them as important nodes within elite power structures, as arenas where the powerful propagated an ideology that cemented their control. The second of these visions is by far the oldest. The earliest scholars were not much interested in the social aspects of religion, questions of participation and power, concentrating instead on theological aspects – the identity and nature of divinities and the myths associated with them. However, on the basis of an image found on seal impressions from the Final Palatial destruction horizon at Knossos (CMS II.8 no.256) and the selective and garbled retrospection of Greek myth Evans interpreted the peak sanctuary on Juktas as the destination of kings seeking to commune with the mother goddess (Evans 1921: 151-163; for critique of the mythical aspect see Nilsson 1950: 73, 461-462). Indeed, the fact that the earliest known examples of peak sanctuaries were at Juktas and Petsophas, the first thought to be closely linked to Knossos and the second clearly intimately tied to the city of Palaikastro, meant that in early accounts peak sanctuaries had a distinctly metropolitan air. Scholars like N. Platon (1951: 156) closely followed Evans in seeing a regal connection for peak sanctuaries, primarily on the basis of the glyptic image from Knossos.

The other, more rustic, vision of peak sanctuaries gained prominence in the 1960s, '70s and '80s. It emerges most clearly in the work of Faure, one of the great pioneers in the study of these sites. For him, they were sites of popular cult, with a clientele of shepherds, farmers, sailors and pregnant women; explicitly opposed to the aristocratic cults attested in monumental buildings (Faure 1967: 148), they lacked any element of elite display or manipulation, being instead concerned only with the basic day to day worries of the simple people (Faure 1969: 212). Rutkowski, another of the great pioneers, emphasised similar qualities but sought to marry them to Evans' view, regarding peak sanctuaries as essentially and initially the rustic shrines of pastoralists that later gained the patronage of kings and urban elites who sought to control all aspects of religion (Rutkowski 1986: 94-95). It is no accident that this era saw both an explosion in the number of these sites being identified and a solidification of the category, thanks in no small part to the work of the very same scholars.

Inevitably, these two visions of peak sanctuaries would eventually collide. When they did so, it was in the framework of a debate driven by processual theory. Following an account of peak sanctuaries emerging hand in hand with the palaces that dated back to Evans, Cherry (1978: 429-431; 1986: 29-32) argued that the two formed a nexus. The peak sanctuaries being tools by which palatial elites propagated a religious ideology to bolster their power. Peatfield (1987; 1990; 1994: 20-21), took on the role of defender of the alternate vision of peak sanctuaries. He argued that peak sanctuaries predated palaces, that they were too numerous and widespread in the Protopalatial period to be connected to palatial power centres, and followed Rutkowski in emphasising their rustic, pastoral concerns. According to Peatfield, elements of prestige material culture at them were concentrated in the Neopalatial period, a time that saw both the coming of palatial control and the centralisation of a previously widespread peasant phenomenon onto only a few remaining sites.

The chronology of the earliest stages of peak sanctuaries has become the key variable differentiating scholars with regard to where they situate themselves in relation to this argument. Haggis (1999: 74-6), for example, grounds his argument that peak sanctuaries are a separate and 'coordinate and co-evolving' phenomenon to palaces primarily on a firm assertion of their chronological priority in EM III-MM IA (though, unlike Peatfield, he emphasises elite involvement right from the beginning). Watrous (1996: 72-81), on the other hand, who sees peak sanctuaries and other extra-urban cult sites as arenas for power display over larger territories by urban elites, especially 'the family group resident in the palaces,' equally firmly places their emergence later in MM I. In contrast to chronology, several of the other key building blocks of the narrative seem to be more or less agreed by all parties. Certain items, such as metalwork and stone vases, are universally agreed to be symptoms of elite involvement at these sites. This is universally agreed to increase through time (though the details and precise timeframe vary from scholar to scholar), and within the elites most scholars emphasise 'palatial' involvement specifically.

The foundation of archaeological narrative: chronology

The centrality of the issue of chronology to the interpretive debate, together with the firmness with which opinions have been stated, is seriously at odds with the actual nature of our empirical knowledge and the state of primary publication. No example of a peak sanctuary has ever gone all the way from systematic excavation to final publication. The bare and eroded nature of the sites makes their stratigraphy difficult or impossible to discern. The pottery assemblages consist of masses of plain, difficult to date vessels, usually in worn and very fragmentary condition.

The arguments about when these sites begin are based on preliminary statements by the excavators of only a couple of them (Atsipades: Peatfield 1992: 71; for Juktas secondary sources refer to an unpublished Mycenaean Seminar given by Karetsou in May 1987). In the case of Atsipades evidence for Prepalatial activity comes in the form of two possible EM II cups. The rest of the pottery is described as only broadly datable to EMIII-MMII (Morris and Peatfield 1995). In the case of Juktas, where the preliminary reports describe the stratigraphy in some detail, it seems that occasional sherds that could be dated to Prepalatial periods were found in a red layer underlying the black layer that contained the first unequivocal signs of cult – ash and figurines. But even in this red underlying layer the Prepalatial sherds were intermingled with MM IB-II pottery (Karetsou 1978, 239-241 and 249). Under these circumstances it is certainly too early to follow scholars like Haggis in seeing peak sanctuaries as indispensable elements of Prepalatial landscapes and it may even be premature to make any definitive statement about their emergence in relation to that of palaces.

Even in later, better understood, periods, with greater quantities of published material, chronological problems persist. The finds typical of these sites, terracotta figurines, are very poorly typologized. There are very few from secure stratified contexts in settlements, so a solid sequence on which to hang stylistic dates is largely lacking. Moreover, the stratified settlement figurines are rather different as an assemblage from those in peak sanctuaries – at the most basic level in settlements the vast majority of anthropomorphic figurines tend to be female whereas at peak sanctuaries, when any indication of numbers is given, male figurines seem to predominate (Collard 1987 and Rethemiotakis 1998 provide lists of figurines from settlements; statements indicating more male than female figurines at peak sanctuaries include: Karetsou 1981: 146; Rutkowski 1991: 29; Karetsou and Rethemiotakis 1992-1993: 290). Myres, an inexperienced excavator, in the first excavation of a peak sanctuary, dated all the figurines to the Protopalatial period. The stratigraphic grounds for doing so were deeply suspect and a great many experts, including Myres' more experienced contemporary Bosanquet, have shown suspicions about elements of his dating (Myres 1902-1903: 361 refers to Bosanquet's doubts; Peatfield 1987: 92; Rutkowski 1991: 14; Nowicki 1994: 31). Rethemiotakis' (1998: 59-60) study of anthropomorphic figurines has been a turning point, providing firm grounds for Neopalatial dates for some figurines previously given Protopalatial dates from sanctuaries like Kophinas, Traostalos or Petsophas. Some of the stylistic criteria used to assign figurines to the Protopalatial period may be less secure than once thought. Polychromy, is clearly attested in figurines from safe Protopalatial strata (Levi 1978: pl.LXIXc) but whether this means black or red ground and white over-painting necessarily give a Protopalatial date is more questionable. White on black was used to attain particular effects on pottery right down to the end of the Neopalatial and white detailing on red is relatively common in the east Cretan Neopalatial pottery repertoire (Cadogan 1978: fig.33). Black ground figurines of Neopalatial date have now been identified (Tzachili 2012: 234-235), the technique of painting white clothing over red-ground skin common on Petsophas male figurines is closely reminiscent of naturalistic wall painting, which only gets going in the Neopalatial period, and the only example of a male figurine with this technique from a stratified settlement context comes from an LM IB layer (Shaw 1996: no.2). Another supposedly Protopalatial feature is the high tiara-like hat or hairstyle. Again, this is clearly attested in the Protopalatial (or even Prepalatial) period, but this does not necessarily mean all examples are of such an early date. It may be attested as a form of adornment in Neopalatial glyptic (CMS II.6 nos.13 and 236; CMS VI nos. 287-8; CMS XI no.282; CMS XII no.168), appears at several peak sanctuaries with an intense Neopalatial phase of use (e.g. Juktas: Karetsou 1978: pl.169e apparently from a layer stratified above early Neopalatial pottery – compare pages 247 and 256; Traostalos: Davaras 1976, fig.138) and perhaps even on figurines from stratified Neopalatial contexts in settlements (e.g. Rethemiotakis 1998: nos. 75 and 146).

At present, Zeimbeki's study of the animal figurines from Juktas and Kophinas is the only in-depth study of a substantial corpus of terracotta figurines from a peak sanctuary benefiting from modern excavation (Zeimbeki 1998; 2004). As such, its conclusions are extremely important as a guide to future questions and to what similar studies might eventually reveal. She demonstrates that the difference between the more technically and stylistically advanced figurines of Kophinas, in comparison to those of Juktas, is not down to a chronological difference but due to different local traditions at the two sites, with the ancient site of Juktas maintaining very long-running traditions of figurine-production through the Protopalatial right down to the Neopalatial period, whereas the younger site of Kophinas adopted the most up-to-date styles and techniques. If this turns out to be a more general pattern and one that extends to other types of figurine, then it would mean that the difference between those sites that have apparently more advanced figurines, such as Kophinas, Vrysinas or Prinias, and those which apparently lack the more advanced types may not be chronological so much as down to local tradition and practice. If that was the case then we should expect to find some sites where continued deposition over long periods of figurines that do not stylistically change because of ingrained tradition has led to figurine assemblages that are conventionally dated to the Protopalatial but pottery assemblages that continue into the Neopalatial. This is precisely the pattern that does seem to emerge at some sites as scholars seek to synthesise the available information (e.g. Modi: Jones 1999: 78; Philioremos: Faro 2008: 126; Three Peak Sanctuaries 2012).

There are very good reasons why any disjunctions between the supposed dates of figurines and the dates of the pottery assemblage would not emerge in the case of the vast majority of peak sanctuaries. Most peak sanctuaries are known only from surface prospection, hasty excavation and extremely brief unillustrated preliminary reports. Only one peak sanctuary has benefited from in-depth pottery study and, as with Zeimbeki's figurine study, the conclusions are vital to forming our assessment of probable broader patterns and future scholarly developments (Tzachili 2003; Faro 2008). At Vrysinas, it seems, there is a much higher instance of fine decorated pottery from the Protopalatial period than there is from the Neopalatial period. During the Neopalatial decorated ware disappears almost completely and the assemblage is dominated by hard to date types of plain or coarse ware, like conical cups, trays and cooking pots. A similar assemblage is suggested for the Neopalatial period from preliminary reports at Kophinas (Spiliotopoulou 2014). If this turns out to be a general pattern then it would not be too hard to see how harried excavators and surface prospectors elsewhere might have been biased towards Protopalatial dates by the greater proportion of distinctive decorated sherds.

The motif of peak sanctuaries initially being dated to the Protopalatial period only for further study to reveal continued (sometimes even more intense) Neopalatial activity is a consistent theme in peak sanctuary studies, which demonstrates that these dating distortions, biasing dating against the Neopalatial, are a real phenomenon (Petsophas: Myres 1902-1903 vs. Davaras 1980; Vrysinas: Davaras 1974 vs. Faro 2008; Kophinas: Platon and Davaras 1960: 526 vs. Karetsou and Rethemiotakis 1992-1993; Traostalos: Alexiou 1963a: 405-406 vs. Chryssoulaki 1999: 311). This means that we should be extremely cautious about accepting narratives of elite-driven centralisation based on the apparent small number of peak sanctuaries currently dated to the Neopalatial. In central Crete, at least, such a linear developmental model may already be defunct. Here, newly excavated peak sanctuaries and re-studies of long-known examples seem to be revealing the early Neopalatial period as a particularly active and complex one with regard to peak sanctuaries. A period that seems to have witnessed abandonments (Sklaverochori: Rethemiotakis 2001-2004a: 340-342), but also perhaps new foundations (Liliano and Krousonas Gournos: Rethemiotakis 2001-2004b; 2001-2004c; Kophinas: Karetsou and Rethemiotakis 1992-1993) and adjustments in setting and behaviour (such as the disappearance of buildings close to Juktas and on the route connecting it to Knossos, combined with new building at the site itself, Karetsou 2013: 89-90).

Distribution patterns

If, then, the state of the published evidence is not good enough for us to base interpretation on chronological patterning, and there are substantial indications that currently accepted chronological patterns are poorly founded, then we are left only with a synchronic assessment of the character of assemblages and with distribution patterns to turn to as the basis of interpretation. Both of these deserve to find a greater place in a debate that is currently driven by topographic considerations and statements about chronological development.

The best argument of those who resisted the 'palatial' nature of peak sanctuaries was always the broad-brush synchronic one regarding their distribution pattern: that not only are they very widespread in areas without any palatial centres, their wealth seems proportional to that of the communities in their immediate vicinity (Peatfield 1987: 92). Even if we take only that (probably artificial) subset with proven Neopalatial activity, there is no correlation between peak sanctuaries and palaces (see also Soetens *et al.* 2008). Malia lacks, thanks to the debunking of Profitis Elias, a peak sanctuary. Phaistos has a close visual, and at least in the Protopalatial period artefactual, relationship with Kamares cave and Mount Ida (Van de Moortel 2011). But Ida lacks a peak sanctuary and the assemblage at Kamares is nothing like that at peak sanctuaries. Kophinas, by contrast, is distant from Phaistos and a row of ridges blocks inter-visibility with the Mesara. There is no proven palatial centre in the immediate vicinities of Vrysinas, Philioremos, or Liliano. Traostalos is usually assumed to be related to Zakros but there is no inter-visibility between the two and it is almost equidistant between Zakros and Palaikastro: its closest relationship is with the land and sea routes connecting these *two* major centres (Chryssoulaki 2001: 64). All in all, this pattern may not disprove palatial patronage of Neopalatial peak sanctuaries but it does not provide any kind of empirical foundation for such a relationship either.

A more fine-grained examination of distribution patterns allows us to investigate patterns of patronage and interrogate elitist interpretations more precisely. Current understandings of elite (and by extension palatial) involvement in peak sanctuaries are based on only a couple of classes of object – metalwork (figurines, blades, jewellery) and stone vases (principally libation tables) – married to a couple of phenomena – architectural elaboration and the presence of inscriptions. By looking at the distribution of these items and phenomena in contemporary settlements we can gain some idea of the sectors of the population that could have had access to them. The last two can be dealt with quickly. It has now been well established that Linear A inscribed documents are well attested beyond the palaces and that there is little basis on which to argue that writing was confined to a 'palatial' elite (Schoep 1996; 2000; 2001). By far the largest building on a peak sanctuary belongs to Juktas, which is between about 150m^2 and 250m^2, depending on whether it originally had a, now destroyed, north wing. This puts it well within the size range of 'normal' Minoan houses (Whitelaw 2001: figs 2.4-2.5), meaning that the architectural elaboration on even the greatest peak sanctuary was potentially within the capabilities of numerous groups within Minoan society to commission. Bronze artefacts, including the distinctive thin symbolic double axes found at some peak sanctuaries, are widely distributed within Minoan households, including in relatively small houses and second or third tier sites (Haysom 2010), indicating that they were not monopolised by the upper strata of society. Libation tables, one of the most distinctive stone vase types at peak sanctuaries are also attested at households at a low point on any house-size hierarchy at second tier settlements, as in the case of those found in various households along the lower east road at Gournia (Boyd-Hawes 1908: pl. V 14, 15, 17, 18, 19). Only the gold finds, which are very small and occur in small numbers at only a few peak sanctuaries, have any claim to be a more restricted type (e.g. Karetsou and Koehl 2011). Even here, however, we should be cautious, as anthropomorphic destruction processes will have led to the disappearance of similar materials from settlements and we have no real idea of their original distribution. Spectacular finds, such as the ivory box from Mochlos, do suggest that rare imported materials were distributed occasionally far beyond the largest settlements and the most monumental buildings (Soles and Davaras 2010).

Those scholars like Faure who saw peak sanctuaries as popular peasant cult sites were not simply naïve. They were referencing a manifest phenomenon in the archaeological record, the rather underwhelming material record from these sites. No doubt they had at the back of their mind an implicit comparison with classical Greek sanctuaries (Faure tended to conflate the periods). This contrast is a real one. Almost all of the most impressive objects from Classical Greece come from sanctuaries, whereas almost all the most impressive items of Minoan culture come from settlements.

The symbolism of peak sanctuaries

There is nothing in the raw materiality of peak sanctuaries that demands an elite interpretation of them. Indeed, in comparison to the material wealth of contemporary settlements, regardless of the occasional gold bead or piece of foil, the materiality at these sites in simple terms of absolute wealth is relatively understated. But as religious places we cannot hope to understand them or their social role simply on the basis of quantification. The assemblages at them are symbolic and only by understanding the symbolism can we fully appreciate them.

The poor state of publication clouds the issue of the diversity of peak sanctuaries. There are signs that diversity did exist. At Traostalos, for example, the majority of bronze figurines are female whereas everywhere else male bronze figurines appear to predominate (Verlinden 1984: 183-184). The only assemblage of terracotta anthropomorphic figurines that is published is that from Petsofas (Rutkowski 1991). It is very highly selected and as comparanda we only have items on display in museums, brief preliminary statements by excavators and the occasional photograph (a partial list of published examples can be found in Verlinden 1984: 233-242). Some sanctuaries, like Juktas, clearly had much more diversity in their assemblages than others, including objects (marine-style pottery, a stone rhyton) that are rare or absent elsewhere (Karetsou 1978: 255; 1980: 343-344). In the space available I will only pick out a couple of patterns that are broadly attested, which seem interrelated, and which can shed some light on the sociological aspect of peak sanctuary activity.

As I have argued elsewhere, the analysis of symbolism needs to be based on patterns and connections within the broadly contemporary data-set (Haysom 2010). Importing interpretations, such as that votive limbs at peak sanctuaries must be to do with healing, on the basis of an external parallel, such as Christian *tamata*, is always dangerous, because it risks prioritizing the external interpretation over empirical patterning. The analysis that follows, therefore, is strictly based on comparing the use of symbols in peak sanctuaries with that elsewhere in the Minoan material record.

Perhaps the most consistent pattern at peak sanctuaries is the large number of terracotta animal figurines. Wherever an indication of numbers is given the vast majority (77% at Juktas, 100% at Kophinas) are always said to be bovine figurines (Kophinas and Juktas: Zeimbeki 1998: 247; Traostalos: Chryssoulaki 1999: 314; Petsophas: Myres 1902-1903: 377; Vrysinas: Papadopoulou and Tzachili 2005: 1048; Atsipades: Peatfield 1992: 72; Skaverochori: Rethemiotakis 2001-2004a). They can vary in size from the thumbnail terracotta bulls found at Juktas to the large wheel made bulls of Kofinas, or Petsofas (Zeimbeki 1998). Other types of animal are more rarely and sporadically attested (see Kyriakidis 2005: table 21 for a rough presence/absence chart). But at Juktas, the only peak sanctuary where numbers beyond bovines are indicated, agrimia take the second place among quadrupeds (Zeimbeki 1998: 246). It is noticeable that when peak sanctuaries are attested by surface prospection bovine figurines rather than any other type almost inevitably make an appearance (e.g. Nowicki 2007: 6, 12). A predominance of bovine imagery is the closest thing to a constant amongst the symbolic repertoire of peak sanctuaries and, therefore, a good place to start in understanding them.

The symbolism of bovines has a considerable time depth all over Crete (e.g. Warren 1972: 220; Branigan 1970: fig.18). The argument that it was particularly associated with Knossos overlooks this (Hallager and Hallager 1995), even if at some point in its history Knossos sought to manipulate the image in distinctive ways. By the Neopalatial period, which gives us our richest iconographic horizon, bovine imagery was used in very particular ways. It is the most common animal in sphragistic iconography, where it often appears emblematically (Shapland 2010: fig. 4). However, it is by looking at interaction between bovines and people in iconography that we can understand the specifics of its cultural significance. In this sort of imagery, the interaction is predominantly competitive or violent, and almost invariably, the interaction is with men. Of the 28 glyptic images featuring a person interacting with a clear bovine deriving from a clear Neopalatial context only two are not violent/competitive (CMS V suppl.1A no. 173; CMS II.7 no. 29; the latter is also the only instance of interaction between a bovine and a female figure from the group). The omnipresent violence/competition in bovine-human interaction only becomes accentuated if one includes instances with an assumed, but not depicted, human agent, as in the cases of bovines pierced with missiles (e.g. CMS II.7 no. 60). Relief-decorated stone-vases provide the second richest vein of Neopalatial imagery. Bulls specifically – sex is clearer in this medium – are the most common animal depicted and in this case the imagery is invariably violent and male orientated (e.g. Evans 1921: fig. 507; Kaiser 1976: pl. 5; Koehl 2006: no. 164). They are caught in nets, wrestled and leapt over. This same violent imagery is referenced more rarely in other media. Bull-askoid rhyta, like those from Pseira, have net patterns across their backs (Koehl 2006: pl. 2-3). Bull-relief fresco fragments from Knossos are found with the muscular limbs of athletes, and an ivory pyxis from Knossos shows men with javelins chasing a bull over a rocky landscape (Kaiser 1976: 278-279, 290; Alexiou 1967: pls. 30-33 – these last two are not securely Neopalatial coming certainly or possibly from later contexts).

There is a definite symbolic resonance between relief stone vases and peak sanctuaries, with both tending to select common symbols out of the much broader corpus of contemporary symbolism is attested in multiple ways. Scholars have long believed that tripartite buildings on these vases depicted in rocky landscapes, decorated with horns of consecration and flagpole-like pylons are images of peak sanctuaries (Platon 1951: 154-155; 1971: 163-167). This has occasionally been doubted (Platon 2003) but can be defended because it is part of a broader pattern of resonances. Juktas exhibits a unique concentration of large architectural horns of consecration (D'Agata 1992). The symbol is attested at several peak sanctuaries (Alexiou 1963a: 404-405; Davaras 1974: 211; Rethemiotakis 2001-2004b) and a find from Petsofas, which depicts a sequence of horns of consecration in the form of a tripartite building that is also reminiscent of a mountain range, seems to make the cluster of associations explicit (Davaras 1980). Relief stone vases are the main medium on which boxing is depicted. Arms with boxing gloves have now been identified at several sanctuaries (Rethemiotakis 2001: 126-128), and since these objects were initially thought to be phalloi (Peatfield 1992: fig.23), mentions of phalloi at other sanctuaries may indicate a much broader distribution of the boxing image through peak sanctuaries (e.g. Karetsou 1985: 289; Chryssoulaki 2001: 62). Studies of figurines at Kophinas even suggest diorama-like groups of fighting boxers were left at the site (Rethemiotakis 2014). Boxing iconography is not common in any other type of context. The famous boxer rhyton from Hagia Triada triangulates the connection between the buildings depicted on stone vases, bovines and boxing. The features usually identified as columns on this vase, around which men box and grapple bulls, are in fact the lower portions of the same pylons that are depicted on the peak sanctuary buildings (Alexiou 1969; Graham 1970: 231).

An extremely rare motif, that of a wavy edged 'baetyl', seen on the roof of the peak sanctuary building on the Zakros rhyton is also attested on terracotta trays from Juktas (Karetsou 1981: fig. 27). Similar trays appear to be a common element within peak sanctuary assemblages (Faro 2008: fig. 5.13; Peatfield 1992: 70) and are depicted in use on another of the peak sanctuary depictions on a stone vase (Alexiou 1963b). Yet another relief vase depicts men marching in front of one of these buildings holding what appear to be stone ladles in their outstretched arms. As others have noticed this is an unusual type of vessel whose distribution is focussed on peak sanctuaries (Bevan 2007: 131, fig. 6.19). Finally, some objects from peak sanctuaries, such as relief scenes showing animals, perhaps agrimia, leaping amongst rocky landscapes, a bull-grappling figurine, and a diorama scene of a peribolos within a rocky landscape featuring a human figure leaving disc-like objects at a stepped niche, seem to mirror the iconography of relief stone vases directly (Karetsou 1977: 420; Tzachili 2011: chapter 1; Rethemiotakis 2001-2004a; Rethemiotakis 2001-2004b).

That these are instances of a common selection of specific motifs and not just the general accordance with patterns in contemporary iconography is shown by the absences. We might expect given the religious nature of the sites, for instance, that representatives of the large corpus of exotic or fantastic animals would turn up at peak sanctuaries. But animals such as lions and griffins, which are frequent on seals, have never been attested from one of these sites. Significantly, they have never been attested on relief stone vases either.

The multitude of the interconnections between the imagery on relief vases found in settlements and the objects found at peak sanctuaries makes the connection between the two incontrovertible and means that we should focus our attention on the symbolic concerns of this imagery as being one of the primary concerns of the sanctuaries. These vessels depict exclusively male iconography (Logue 2004; Marinatos 2005). As we have seen, there are signs that male figurines tend to predominate in peak sanctuaries. The images on the vases concern ritual, violence and competition between men, and between men and animals. The animals that are most attested at peak sanctuaries are those that men violently compete with on vases. The bronze blades, depictions of dagger-bearing men, and boxing gloves, at peak sanctuaries attest to the violence of symbolism at these sites (for bronze blades see Kofinas: Platon and Davaras 1961-1962: 288; Modi and Petsophas: Davaras 1972: 652; Vrysinas: Davaras 1974: 211; Juktas: Karetsou 1984: 609).

By tracing this symbolism contextually back to settlements in the same way that was done above with prestige objects we can gain a view of the sectors of society who particularly mobilized it. Here an interesting disjunction appears, because relief stone vases are relatively focussed in their distribution (Kaiser 1976 has the most comprehensive list). They are most numerous at Knossos, where they are widely distributed. Unfortunately, none are in situ (most coming from surface or top soil layers) meaning we cannot say anything positive about their Neopalatial distribution at the site. Elsewhere in primary contexts, however, they are focussed in central buildings, at Zakros and Hagia Triada. Some of the most iconic images that these vases concern themselves with, boxing and particularly bull-jumping, seem to have been the subject of the finest naturalistic gold rings of the Neopalatial period. Significantly bull jumping is particularly prominent on those gold rings that are known to have stamped sealings found at multiple sites (Krzyszkowska 2005: 189-190). What we have, then, is one of the main bodies of symbolism at peak sanctuaries resonating with objects which are mobilized by some of the wealthiest and best-connected in Minoan society.

My point here is not that the elite was the only group building connections with peak sanctuaries. Indeed, the opposite can be shown to be true. House N at Palaikastro (Sackett and Popham 1965: 252-268; 1970: 215-231) is particularly interesting in this regard because, like the stone vases, it too attests to symbolic resonances with peak sanctuaries across multiple dimensions. The household's drinking sets were equipped with two rhyta, one shaped like an agrimi, the other like a beetle, both common peak sanctuary images and the latter rarely attested anywhere else. Moreover, the house was equipped with a set of horns of consecration, as we have seen a symbol closely connected to peak sanctuaries. But this house is unremarkable architecturally, and not one of the larger buildings in the town, suggesting modest households too could claim links to peak sanctuaries.

Nevertheless, what this analysis should show is that the highest elite in Minoan society was very engaged at a symbolic level with making connections to peak sanctuaries. And this presents us with a problem, which is the apparent dissonance between this elite engagement and the predominantly understated material from the peak sanctuaries themselves. Given that the Minoan elite was capable of commissioning monumental buildings and extraordinary craft objects from rare materials why do we not find more of these items at peak sanctuaries? This question may be the key to understanding the social place of peak sanctuaries.

Modelling peak sanctuaries in Minoan society

The answer to the dissonant understated nature of peak sanctuary assemblages may lie in the nature of the symbolic resonances that the elite images seek to build. As we have seen a strong theme is to do with male physical competition and violence: the raw physical ability to pummel an opponent in a boxing match, to chase a goat over a rocky landscape, to leap over or wrestle a bull. The terracotta figurines of bulls would have brought these physical abilities to mind, as would the bronze or terracotta figurines of lithe men in the same loin clothes and cod pieces worn by athletes on relief stone vases, or the terracotta limbs of boxers. But these objects did so in ways that understated wealth. By doing so, I would argue, they had the effect of concentrating the attention on the physically competitive characteristic that they evoke. An elite bull jumper by dedicating a simple clay model of the bull that he had overcome concentrated the viewer's mind on his physical dominance rather than his wealth as his distinguishing characteristic.

The blandness of the Minoan votives, in effect, focussed the attention from the object towards the physical competition, the boxing and bull jumping, that the object was commemorating, keeping competition in the realm of the physical skill rather than wealth display. Here we can return to the traditionalism, the long running consistencies in the figurine record that Zeimbeki noticed. This might betoken considerable social pressure to maintain consistency with what was done in the past. These two phenomena can be combined as the underlying ideological framework of peak sanctuary dedication. Anthropologists, like Mary Helms (1998), who collect and look for consistencies across societies, believe that many aristocracies are consistent in two respects: first, they claim connections to the deep and distant past and, second, they claim to be actually, physically, really, superior to everybody else. In many traditional societies, and we do not have to go that far to seek parallels, the latter claim is true enough: better diets, education, time to practice skills that others cannot afford, allow elites to really be better, in an immediate sense, than those less fortunate. By keeping to a fairly constrained and materially unremarkable set of votives, I would suggest, the Minoan elite both cemented its association with age old practice and maintained the emphasis on the skills and physical prowess, that only they had the resources and leisure to attain. There was no danger that a Neopalatial visitor to a sanctuary would fixate on the identity of the craftsman who created objects, or the object itself, rather than the act of skill it symbolised.

In some ways this argument is situated close to those of scholars, like Watrous or Haggis, that see peak sanctuaries as expressions of elite ideology, although it is far removed from Haggis' particular view of peak sanctuaries as organizational centres. Instead, it sees them as forums of competition, inherently a more multivalent vision, one that mirrors emanations from the elite with those from the rest of society. The dampening of expressions of elite wealth, the focussing on expressions of 'innate' ability and traditionalism are suggestive of pressures from broader society who, as we have seen, were materially capable of involvement as peers and who themselves built symbolic connections to these cults. Competition is a form of dialogue and putting the emphasis on dialogue may resolve many of the dichotomies that unilateral equation of peak sanctuaries with one group or another otherwise establishes.

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Inverting vases in Bronze Age Crete: Where? When? Why?

Santo Privitera

Introduction

As is well known, there is no scholarly consensus regarding the definition of ritual. As an outcome of the on-going debate between historians of religion, cultural anthropologists and archaeologists, a major distinction has been made between religious and non-religious rituals, both of which include standardized sequences of actions and a well-defined intention and message (Bell 1997: 138-169; Bloch 1989; Kyriakidis 2005: 28-30; 2007; Rappaport 1999: 137). In particular, ritual has long been a major focus for prehistoric archaeologists, who often take advantage of the diverse connotations of this term in the absence of an uncontroversial definition of the diacritics of religion and belief (Insoll 2004: 78-80). Against this background, rather than attempting to grasp the 'frame of mind' that an archaeologically documented ritual entails by drawing on cross-cultural comparisons, it seems more promising to try to highlight 'what ritual does' (Bell 2007), that is, to make sense of the patterns of behaviour which the ritual actions involve, by drawing on the evidence represented by the related artefacts, the depositional practices, and wider settings. Yet, ritual artefacts and settings are not always identifiable as a *per se* category in the archaeological record. Indeed, if one refers to Catherine Bell's 'non-definitive traits' of ritual (namely, repetition, invariance, rule-governance, formalism, air of tradition and symbolism: Bell 1997: 138), it is an inescapable conclusion that most human actions convey various degrees of ritual connotation. In reciting a prayer or a benediction formula at the beginning of a meal, for instance, no special tools or settings are involved that can affect the effectiveness of a ritual action; nor can the meal itself be defined as a religious ritual. A caveat should accordingly be borne in mind, namely, that most ritual actions are deeply embedded into the everyday life of an individual or a community (Bradley 2005: 44-50, 119-120) and that many of them end up leaving no or minimally visible traces in the archaeological record – all the more so when an individual, domestic, or at any rate non-official ritual is concerned (Kyriakidis 2007: 16-18). Conversely, this very consideration enhances the importance of the contextual interpretation of the archaeological evidence, since it envisages the role that even the humblest of artefacts can play in carrying out a ritual within the context of settings that are occasionally used to that end.

This paper focuses on a seemingly humble ritual, the remnants of which are represented by clay (and rarely stone) vessels, such as conical cups, one-handled cups, bowls, or jugs, usually found upside down in the excavations. It aims to provide the reader with a succinct overview of the evidence available, which the author has compiled over the last fifteen years (Privitera 2004; 2008: 192-193). However, this collection of the data cannot be considered to be complete. Firstly, it does not include all the cases when vases excavated upside down have been reported from Crete. In fact, placing a vessel upside down is in itself not a ritual act, when the shelf of a cupboard or a pantry full of tableware is concerned. When studying a pottery assemblage, moreover, one must recall that vessels of small and medium size are often found turned upside down as an outcome of what La Motta and Schiffer (1999) dubbed the 'non-cultural formation processes', which can occur during the use, abandonment or post-abandonment stages in a building's life history. Secondly, as Marinatos (1939-1941: 79) pointed out as early as 1941, the position of the vessels found in many old excavations on Crete was not always recorded and accordingly no attempt at ritual interpretation was made. This reminds us of the prudent approach that archaeologists must always employ when they argue for the identification of a ritual not only in the field, but above all when they are 'digging out' information from old publications or unpublished reports of earlier excavations.

To my knowledge, the first archaeologist to draw attention to ritually inverted vases on Crete was D.G. Hogarth, who excavated more than two hundred conical cups upside down on the floor of a LM IB semi-hypogeal pillar crypt at Gypsades, Knossos: each of them 'when lifted up, was seen to cover a little heap of carbonized vegetable matter' (Hogarth 1899-1900: 76). The first to attempt an interpretation of this ritual, however, was Marinatos (1939-1941: 78-79), who discovered several inverted conical cups and a fire-box inside a burnt layer in room 8 of the LM IB mansion at Sklavokampos. By drawing on Near-Eastern parallels of the first millennium B.C., he contended that placing vessels upside down represented a magic action, aimed at locking dreadful demons inside them. The presence of a burnt layer, inside which more than four hundred conical cups had been placed upside down, was detected once again by Nikolaos Platon in an LM IB sanctuary at Rousses Chondrou (Platon 1957; 1959). In many other cases, however, no special attention has been devoted to the discovery of upside down vases. In fact, in the majority of cases inverted vases have been interpreted as the remnants of toasting rituals and/or libations (e.g., MacGillivray *et al.* 1999), which involved pouring an offering into the ground by means of inverting the vessel containing it. Drawing on a cross-cultural perspective, in particular, Åström contended that 'the usual pattern was sacrifice to divinities – preferably chthonic – and to the dead' (Åström 1987: 7). Of course, offering a liquid, viscous, or even a solid substance inside an upside down vessel can occur in many diverse settings, and the character of the related ritual can depend on various factors, such as the location, the occasion during which it is carried out, the possibility of repeating it at given intervals, the number of people involved, the addressee/s of the ritual message (if any), etc. Moreover, given the variety of settings and the humble nature of the artefacts involved, the chance of detecting such a simple ritual essentially depends on the cultural and natural processes which have brought about the formation of the archaeological record. From a behavioural perspective, in fact, 'building deposits', that is, depositions of objects inside pits or under walls, floors, benches, etc., can be considered as 'snapshots' of the final stage of a ritual action, whose accomplishment implied no further repetition (Boulotis 1985; Herva 2005; MacGillivray *et al.* 1999). Conversely, in interpreting a floor assemblage, both in a house or in the annex of a tomb, we should always take into account the possibility that some or all of the artefacts used during the ritual action were removed at some point after its accomplishment; for only in the very rare case of a destruction occurring at the same time as the end of a ritual could an archaeologist safely chance upon evidence comparable to the 'building deposits'.

Where and when

To date, ritually inverted vessels have been excavated all over Crete, from Chania in the west to Palaikastro and Zakros in the east, at sites dated from as early as EM IIB (at Lebena) to as late as LM IIIB (at Hagia Triada, Sissi, Palaikastro). All in all, about fifty cases have been documented from seventeen sites of the island spanning more than one thousand years. The variety of locations includes cemeteries, settlements, and at least one palace, namely that of Phaistos in MM IIB. Nonetheless, the ritual does not seem ubiquitous, since it is so far not attested in peak sanctuaries. Indeed, we cannot rule out the possibility that the various cases hint at different beliefs, despite showing a relatively low level of variability. To quote from Kyriakidis (2007: 16), 'the association of identical rituals with identical beliefs should not be taken for granted. The continuity of religious ritual practice may be indicative of, but does not in itself prove, the continuity of religious belief'. In fact, drawing on the available evidence, it seems fitting to group the various cases depending on the character of the find-spot, in order to contrast cemeteries *vs* settlements and, within the latter, domestic *vs* non-domestic buildings. Significant convergence between groups, if any, can eventually highlight the recurrent features and the possible unitary character of distinct ritual actions.

In Prepalatial and Protopalatial cemeteries (Table 1) most cases consist of single vases placed upside down above or next to bones in secondary depositions, mainly skulls. In particular, one such case, at Archanes—Phourni Tomb Gamma (Papadatos 2005)—has been convincingly interpreted as a building deposit, since it consists of a skull and an inverted cup found under the footing of a wall built when the *dromos* was added to the tomb (MM IA). In the Mesara, both Lebena and Kamilari seem to yield entirely different evidence, since in neither case did inverted vases co-occur alongside bones or skulls, but rather were found on or next to stone platforms or benches, inside annexes adjoining the tombs. The interpretation of annex AN at Lebena as a 'room for operations [...] which recalls later Minoan shrines' (Alexiou and Warren 2004: 174) is hinted at by the plausible identification of the sacrifice of a bird; at the Kamilari tomb the 'enclosure of the offerings' that includes a bench interpreted as an altar can be accordingly interpreted as a space for ritual operations (Figure 1; Levi 1961-1962: 80). As is well known, this data has been interpreted as evidence of ancestor worship (Caloi 2011). In Crete, the earliest evidence of commemoration rites has been recently traced back to Final Neolithic Phaistos, where a skull decorated with ochre was found on the floor of a hut that delimited, to the south, a ceremonial area which provided a triton shell and several ochre containers (Todaro 2012). Later on, the clay models deposited in the Kamilari tomb in LM IA have been convincingly interpreted as representing scenes of offerings to the ancestors (Lefèvre-Novaro 2001). Concerning inverted vases, anyway, a few cases are documented in primary burials, such as at Building 8 at Archanes-Phourni. It cannot be assumed, therefore, that the many occurrences of inverted cups in association with relocated skulls, such as those recorded at MM IA-B Palaikastro (Bosanquet 1901-1902), attest commemoration rites. Indeed, the practice of the re-deposition of bones appears to be quite a widespread phenomenon in Final Neolithic and Bronze Age Crete; accordingly, the deposition of single cups seemingly attests to the practice of making an elementary offering, such as a libation, to the individual dead. By LM IA, Archanes – Phourni yielded the only attestation of inverted vases in a cemetery area, albeit in a non-funeral building: inside the west room of Building 4 more than two hundred conical cups were lying on the floor, many of which were upside down. Since other drinking vessels were also found inside the building, it seems plausible that it was an operational space, being conceived as 'a building for the living...to serve the needs of the dead' (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 228). Since by this time no burials are attested at Phourni, it seems plausible to

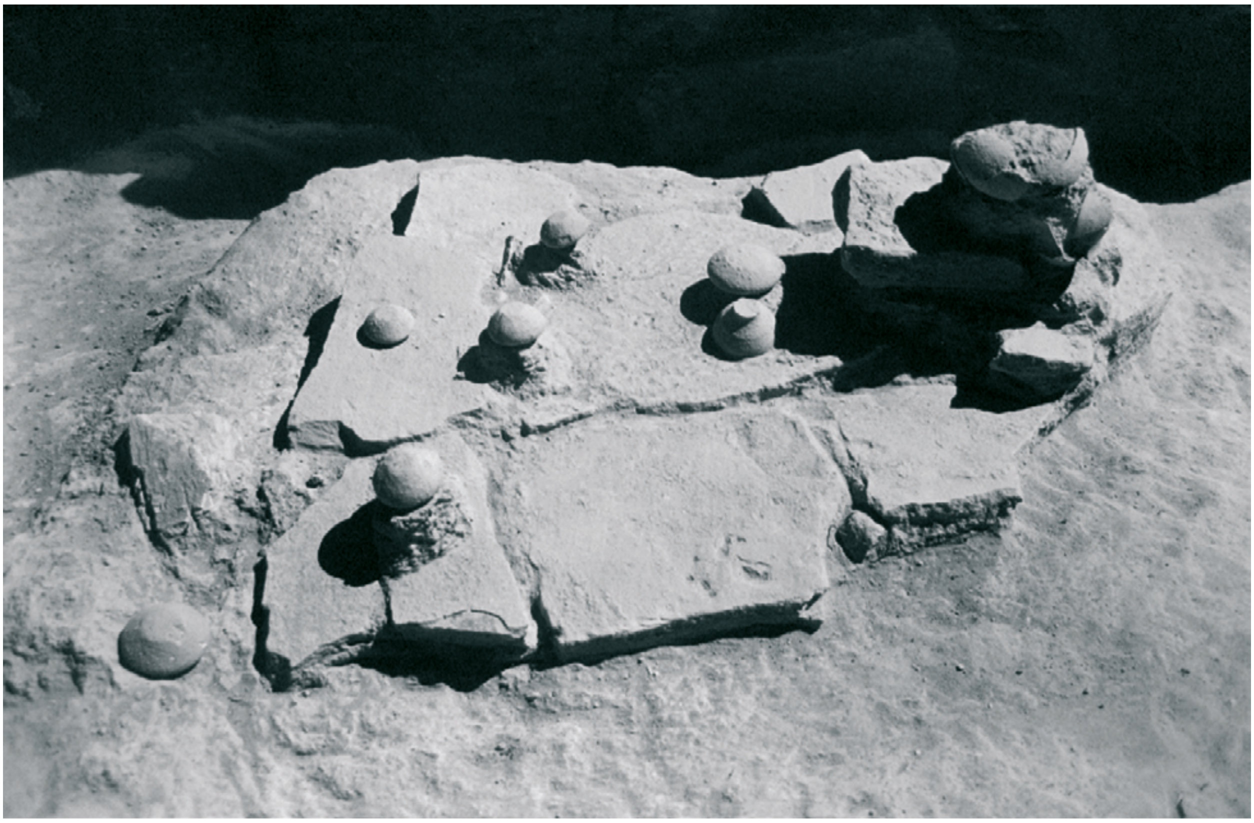

Figure 1. Upside down vases on the so-called altar in the tomb of Kamilari (from Levi 1961-1962: 81, fig. 106. Copyright of the Italian Archaeological School at Athens).

suggest that Building 4 was devoted to commemoration rites of the ancestral dead. Between LM I and LM IIIB, further inverted conical cups in primary burials are attested at Poros, Episkopi Pediadas, and at Metochi Kalou respectively (Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki and Rethemiotakis 1978; Kanta 1980: 268; Lembesi 1967). At Metochi Kalou, an inverted conical cup hid an LM IIIA2 figurine, whereas a nearby conical cup contained traces of an organic substance, which was probably burnt in honour of the dead.

A second group consists of a few non-domestic buildings placed within settlements, such as the first Phaistos palace and its annexes, and independent buildings interpreted as sanctuaries (Table 2). The evidence from the Phaistos palace, dated to MM IIB, seems quite consistent in character: inverted conical cups, isolated or in small groups, were found lying on floor slabs and next to lamps. A minimal contextual interpretation of the ritual is therefore possible, since it is possible (1) to rule out a case for a liquid offering, aimed at being absorbed in the ground, and (2) to envisage a strict link with the fire. In other words, it seems plausible that the inverted cups contained a solid or viscous offering, which could be burnt and possibly consisted of organic materials mixed with some scented and/or fatty substance. Meanwhile, inverted bowls were found at the site and nearby Hagia Triada upside down or opposed in pairs (that is, one upside down and one not) as building deposits under floors (La Rosa 2002; Baldacci 2013). It is worth recalling that in the Kamilari *tholos* tomb inverted cups were found on floor slabs and on the so-called altar and were accordingly not intended for pouring a liquid into the ground. Earlier, at both Lebena and Sissi-Bouffo, moreover, inverted cups either contained charcoal or were found alongside ashes. Within settlements, two buildings that yielded inverted vases seem to stand apart from the majority of domestic constructions and have accordingly been included in this group. They are respectively located at Rousses Chondrou (Platon 1957 and 1959) and at Knossos-Gypsades (Hogarth 1899-1900). The building at Rousses, being almost rectangular in shape (ca. 8m x 10 m), is dated to MM IIIB/LM IA. In fact, although small, it yielded quite rich floor assemblages: about thirty *pithoi*, many pouring vessels (such as jugs and bridge-spouted jars), a pair of stone libation tables and more than four hundred conical cups placed upside down in a burnt layer on the floor of room B. A paved area bordered the building on the west. Both the high storage capacity and the small size of the building seem to rule out an interpretation as a house. It was quite possibly a community facility, used at times in some ritual occasions. One can wonder whether such a structure can be compared to later Greek *hestiateria* and club-houses; unfortunately, the relationship of this building to the remainder of the settlement and its cemetery is unknown. At Knossos-Gypsades, House B,

Table 1. Inverted vases in Minoan cemeteries

Site	Find-spot	Chronology
Lebena – Gerokampos, Tomb II Alpha	Room AN (EM IIB or EM III): several cups upside down on the stone slabs, with one on a bench alongside ashes, bones of a bird, and shell (Alexiou and Warren 2004: 19, 161, 173). Room A (MM IA): conical cups upside down next to and over bones (Alexiou and Warren 2004: 158).	EM IIB or EM III; MM IA
Sissi – Bouffo, Cemetery	Compartment 1.2=1.13: inverted straight-sided cup on a pebble floor, containing charcoal (Schoep *et al.* 2012: 36).	EM III/MM IA
Sissi – Bouffo, Cemetery	Compartment 1.3: south-east corner of room, jug, twelve cups upside down and one tripod dish 'sitting on a level of sediment that had accumulated over an earlier pebble floor' (Schoep 2009: 49-50; Schoep, *et al.* 2012: 37).	EM III/MM IA
Sissi – Bouffo, Cemetery	Compartment 9.2: inverted cup with an adult humerus in secondary deposition (Schoep *et al.* 2012: 43-44, fig. 2.21).	EM III/MM IA
Archanes – Phourni, Tomb Gamma	Inverted conical cup and skull beneath the footing of South wall of dromos (Papadatos 2005: 60).	MM IA
Archanes – Phourni, Building 7	Room 5: cup upside down on the skull of a skeleton in secondary deposition (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 208)	MM IA
Archanes – Phourni, Building 8	West room, upper layer: inverted conical cup next to the skull in a primary deposition (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 209). East room: two conical cups upside down alongside remains of bones.	MM IA-II; MM II
Archanes – Phourni, Building 19	Three cups upside down, placed next a relocated skull. Jug and cup upside down out of the building (Maggidis 1994: 86-88).	MM IA through MM IIA
Gournia, Tomb II (?)	Four cups embedded in a skull from the west room (Soles 1992: 248).	MM IB
Palaikastro, Tomb VII	Over one hundred and forty vases, including many cups and plates found inverted, along with about one hundred skulls in secondary deposition (Bosanquet 1901-1902).	MM IA or MM IB
Moni Odigitria	Rectangular building, Room C: inverted handled cup and conical cup on the floor, along with three teapots and a dish (Vasilakis and Branigan 2010: 58, pl. 33).	MM IB
Kamilari, Tholos	Chamber: three stone vessels in a row upside down; Room Beta: three stone vases found in a row (MM IIB); Courtyard: conical cups on altar in front of room Beta; enclosure wall: row of three inverted MM IIB vases (Levi 1961-1962: 80; Caloi 2011).	MM II
Archanes – Phourni, Building 4	More than two hundred conical cups, many of which were upside down, on the floor of the west room (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 223-229).	LM IA
Poros	Inverted conical cup (Lembesi 1967: 199)	LM I
Metochi Kalou Herakliou	Two conical cups, one of which containing an organic substance, the other inverted upon a clay figurine (Dimopoulou-Rethemiotaki and Rethemiotakis 1978)	LM IIIA2
Episkopi Pediadas	Inverted conical cup (Kanta 1980: 268)	LM IIIB

Table 2. Inverted Vases in Non-Domestic Buildings
(Palaces, Shrines and 'Special Buildings').

Site	**Find-spot**	**Chronology**
Phaistos, First Palace and Annexes	Room LIII-LV: conical cup upside down on a stone slab (Levi 1976: 95, fig. 119). Protopalatial space under room 25: five conical cups upside down around a lamp (Levi 1976, fig. 614). Room XCV: slab with hint of an inverted conical cup next to a lamp surrounded by pebbles (Levi 1976: 533-534, fig. 826-827). Rooms LVIII, CII, CVIII, CIX, CXIII: building deposits comprising pairs of opposed bowls and in a few cases single bowls upside down (La Rosa 2002: 14-31).	MM IIB
Rousses Chondrou	About four hundred conical cups in a deep burnt layer; libation tables; storeroom with aboutthirty*pithoi* (Platon 1957 and 1959).	MM IIIB/L M IA
Knossos, Gypsades Shrine	Conical cups on a pebble floor alongside a triton shell (Hood 1957)	LM IA
Knossos, Gypsades House B	Room 1: about two hundred inverted conical cups, containing a burnt substance, in rows next to the central pillar (Hogarth 1899-1900: 74-77).	LM IB
Hagia Triada, Shrine H	Conical cups upside down on a bench (Cucuzza 2003).	LM IIIB

LM IB in date, had a rectangular shape and appeared as a semi-hypogeal structure, comprising three rooms, two of which were endowed with central pillars. As already recalled, the conical cups found in the building held remains of a burnt substance; once again, this could apparently exclude a case for a libation in the ground and, if confirmed by future chemical analysis, could shed light on the manipulation of organic substances in order to prepare the 'recipe' used in the ritual. House B of Gypsades was located on the south periphery of the Neopalatial town of Knossos, not far from a small open-air shrine excavated by Hood (1957) and, perhaps more importantly, next to the large cemetery of Gypsades. This proximity to the cemetery opens the possibility that this building was functionally akin to Building 4 at Archanes-Phourni. In a wider perspective, moreover, the three buildings at Rousses, Gypsades, and Archanes-Phourni seem to share a certain 'family likeness'. All of them had to play a key-role on the occasion of rituals which involved the participation of large groups. Inside these buildings, placing the vases upside down seemingly represents not so much the result of a ritual performance, as a ritual action *per se*. In fact, the hundred inverted vases, which had been progressively placed in rows by following an established order so as to occupy the floor of an entire space, had been (1) formerly filled with a solid inflammable substance (at least at Gypsades and Rousses), (2) had afterwards been lit and (3) eventually inverted on the floor by the individuals participating in the ritual. It is not possible to establish whether the vase was placed upside down only after its content had entirely burnt or, alternatively, when it was still lit, even if the former hypothesis seems more plausible. Moreover, due to the high number of vases retrieved, it seems safe to suppose that such a ritual lasted for a considerable length of time (a few hours at least).

As far as houses are concerned (Table 3), inverted vases have been detected in foundation or building deposits, on the one hand, and as part of floor assemblages, on the other. A building deposit can consist of just a single upside down conical cup, as at House AF at Pseira (LM IB), where one such vase was found under the footing of a partition wall, or at House N at Palaikastro (LM IB), where one such vase was lying under the first step of a stair. Otherwise, groups of four to seven vases have been detected under a threshold, such as in House

Table 3. Inverted Vases in Minoan Houses,
A. Building Deposits

Site	**Find-spot**	**Chronology**
Hagia Triada, room under Shrine H	Group of bowls under a floor: one inverted on the ground and two pairs of opposed bowls (Baldacci 2013)	MM IIA
Palaikastro, Building 6	Room B: inverted cup; Room C: inverted bridge-spouted jar; Room L: inverted jug (MacGillivray *et al.* 1999: 465-466).	MM III
Hagia Triada, Complesso Mazza di Breccia	Layer under room Q: ovoid rhyton upside down between stones (building deposit?)	MM IIIA
Kommos, South Building	Room 44: several conical cups upside down, in a layer between two floors, along with two bridge-spouted jars, two *rhyta*, and a jar (Betancourt 1990: 46-48).	MM IIIB
Palaikastro, House N	Room 9-10: cup upside down beneath the first step of the stair (Sackett and Popham 1965: 261).	MM III/LM IA
Knossos, Acropolis House	Room 1: two groups of six and seven conical cups upside down beneath the floor (Catling 1979: 45, fig.52).	LM IA
Vathypetro	Room 13: group of conical cups beneath the floor (Marinatos 1951: 259-261)	LM IA
Chania, House IV	Room B: four conical cups upside down in front of the stair (Hallager and Tzedakis 1984: 7).	LM IB
Palaikastro, Building 1	Bridge-spouted jar upside down under the footing of a wall (MacGillivray *et al.* 1999: 466).	LM II
Palaikastro, Building 5	Room 6: four goblets upside down inside a pit beneath the floor (MacGillivray, *et al.* 1999: 466-467).	LM IB or LM II
Pseira, House AF	Conical cup upside down beneath the footing of a wall between AF8 and AF9 (McEnroe 2001: 54).	LM IB
Hagia Triada	Building X: conical cup beneath west wall, with traces of fire inside (La Rosa and Privitera 2003: 741).	LM IIIA2
Sissi-Kephali, Settlement	Building CD: room 4.5. Foundation deposit west of wall D11, consisting of a large open vessel covered by *pithos* fragments and containing an inverted cup; fragments of triton shell (Letesson 2009: 133-134, fig. 6.27).	LM IIIB

1 at Chania (LM IB); under the floor, such as in the Acropolis House at Knossos (LM IA), and at Building 5 at Palaikastro (LM IB or II); or inside benches, such as in room 13 at Vathypetro (LM IB). In a couple of cases, larger vases are recorded, such as bridge-spouted jars, jugs, or rhyta (South Building at Kommos, MM IIIB, and Building 1 at Palaikastro, LM II). At Hagia Triada, an LM IIIA2 building deposit consisted of a single inverted conical cup, which had traces of burning inside (La Rosa and Privitera 2003). To my knowledge, the latest building deposit where an inverted conical cup was found has been recently detected at Building CD at Sissi (LM IIIB: Letesson 2009).

Not unlike building deposits, vases found upside down above the floors of houses are almost always conical cups (Table 4). The date of the destruction of the buildings results in a more homogeneous chronology for these deposits, either LM IA-B or LM IIIB. In four LM I cases (at Vathypetro, Phaistos-Chalara, Building B.2 at Mochlos, and House A at Zakros: Figure 3), inverted conical cups were found inside storerooms containing *pithoi*, having been placed next to the pillars or by the walls. In the past, several scholars have convincingly stressed the ritual connotations of the palatial storage areas; inside houses one can wonder whether the ritual of inverting vases is somehow related to the request

Table 4. Inverted Vases in Minoan Houses, B. Floor Assemblages

Site	**Find-spot**	**Chronology**
Vathypetro	Room 10: conical cups around the pillars in the storeroom (Marinatos 1949: 107).	LM IA
Phaistos, Chalara House	Room *epsilon*: Magazzino con *pithoi*: two cups upside down between the south wall and a *pithos* (Palio 2001: 276, fig. 29).	LM IB
Mochlos, Building B2	Room 1.1: conical cup upside down on an ox-hide ingot (Soles 2008: 154-155, fig. 10).	LM IB
Palaikastro, House B 1-22	Room B3: five conical cups on the raised floor of a former lustral basin (Bosanquet 1901-1902: 313).	LM IB
Sklavokampos. Rooms 8 and 15	Conical cups upside down, alongside ashes and animal bones (Marinatos 1939-1941).	LM IB
Zakros, House A	Room VIII: thirteen conical cups inside a storeroom with *pithoi* (Hogarth 1900-1901: 131).	LM IB
Palaikastro, Building 1	Room 1: five conical cups upside down in a circle around the head of a figurine (MacGillivray 1987: 143-145, fig. 5, pl. 22d).	LM IIIB
Palaikastro, Building 7	Room 6: stalactite and conical cup upside down (MacGillivray and Sackett 1991: 140, fig. 16). Room 3: conical cups upside down on pebbles (Sackett 1996: 52).	LM IIIB
Sissi – Kephali, Settlement	Building CD: room 3.8: snake tubes, triton shell and inverted conical cup (Gaignerot-Driessen 2011: 89-92, fig. 5.7).	LM IIIB

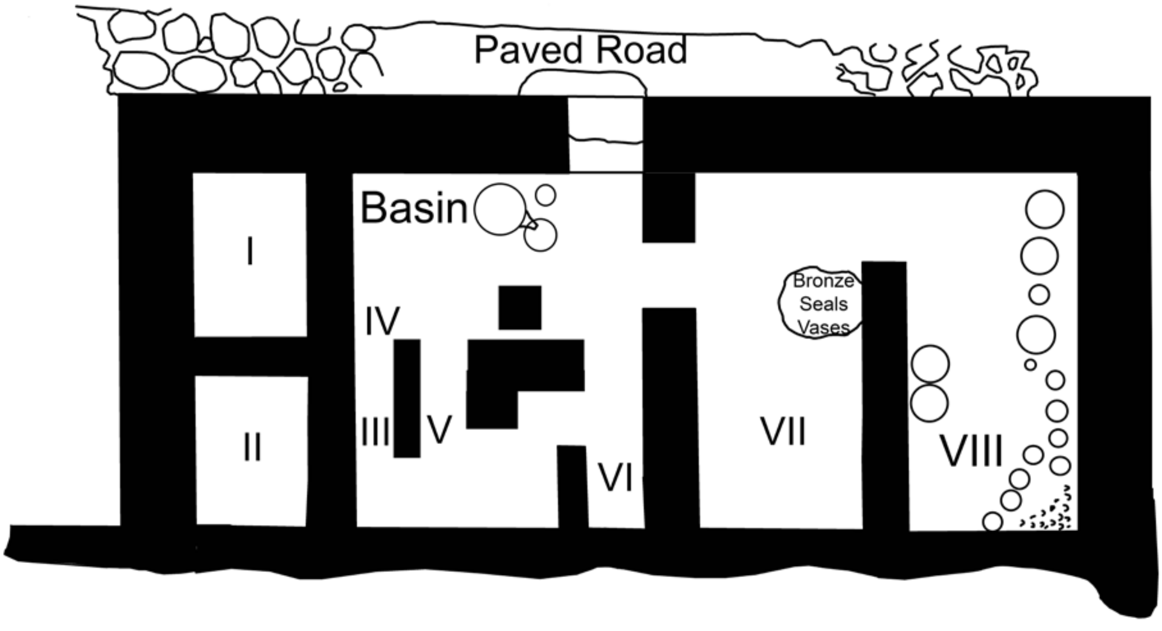

Figure 2. Plan of House A, Zakros, showing location of upside down conical cups at the south-east corner of storeroom VIII (after Hogarth 1901-1902: 131 fig. B and redrawn by G. Vavouranakis).

for protection of the group who lived in the building, either by hinting at the latter's solidity (emphasis on structures) or preservation of the food supply (emphasis on storage). Against such a backdrop, a so far unparalleled discovery is represented by the conical cup that was placed upside down on an ox-hide ingot in a storeroom of Building B.2 at LM IB Mochlos (Soles 2008). In LM IIIB, inverted conical cups have been discovered in room 1 in Palaikastro Building 1 and recently in room 3.8 in Sissi Building CD (Gaignerot-Driessen 2011). The latter appears to have been a repository of ritual *paraphernalia*, such as snake tubes, *kalathoi*, and a triton shell. By contrast, room 1 at Palaikastro – Building 1 (MacGillivray 1987) is particularly intriguing, since it encompasses five conical cups lying in a circle around the head of a large clay figurine, which plausibly represents the recipient of the offering.

Conclusions: how many 'whys'?

Is it possible to infer from such geographically and chronologically scattered evidence a unitary interpretation and a connection with a well-defined belief? In particular, is it convincing to interpret the evidence from the settlements in the light of that from the cemeteries? Once again, we must recall both Kyriakidis' caveat to distinguish between rituals and beliefs and Bell's plea for studying 'what rituals do'. Within such a framework, the above overview has highlighted a recurrent connection between inverted cups and the burning of a solid substance. This evidence, which encompasses the presence of lamps, burnt layers, and traces of fire inside the conical cups, turns up in different kinds of find contexts: cemeteries (Lebena and Sissi-Bouffo; perhaps Metochi Kalou), the first palace at Phaistos, and several Neopalatial settlements (Hagia Triada, Knossos, Rousses, Sklavokampos). Despite being recorded in less than one fourth of the total attestations, the evidence concerning the burning of a solid substance, which involved turning the cups into small lamps or braziers for a short time-span, could be the key for making sense of the ritual. Spaces such as the room with the pillar at Gypsades or that in the building at Rousses, must have been quite dark. One can wonder, moreover, whether the ritual was carried out at night. In other cases, anyway, the inversion of jugs and jars, or even the association between pouring vessels and conical cups, seems to hint at the carrying out of a toasting ceremony, which possibly involved a libation underground, as is widely attested in historical times. Therefore, we cannot exclude that we are actually in front of different rituals, which evolved side by side over more than a millennium.

From a contextual perspective, the evolution over time of the ritual/s of inverting vases can be summarized as follows. When one looks at the cemeteries, it is immediately evident that the tombs yielded the oldest evidence, beginning in the Prepalatial period; only in the Kamilari tomb, and possibly at Gournia, are stone and clay vases reported as late as MM IIB, whereas at the cemetery of Archanes – Phourni LM IA Building 4 yielded many conical cups upside down, at a time when the area did not receive new burials. Within the settlements, conversely, vases turned upside down make their first appearance in MM IIA. Of course, this evidence is affected by our limited knowledge of Neopalatial cemeteries, on the one hand, and of Prepalatial and Protopalatial settlements, on the other. The fact that ritually inverted vases have not been reported from tombs after LM IB, but are attested inside houses and free-standing shrines, is nonetheless particularly telling for the evolution of this ritual over time and leads one to suggest that it may have undergone a complex history. Table 5 summarizes the various characters of the find-spots, which yielded inverted vases, and helps to highlight significant intersections among the aforementioned groups of contexts. On the one hand, the MM IA building deposit at *tholos* tomb Gamma, Archanes – Phourni, seems the antecedent of the building deposits identified within Neopalatial settlements, whereas ritual operations carried out at Lebena– Gerokambos in EM IIB and at Kamilari in MM II seem to be the forerunners of those at the LM I and LM IIIB shrines. Thus, one can wonder whether the ritual left the cemeteries and moved to the settlements over time. On the other hand, and perhaps more significantly, at least two of the three Neopalatial buildings that yielded the largest floor assemblages of inverted vases, namely, Building 4 at Archanes – Phourni and House B at Gypsades, apparently drew their *raison d'être* from their proximity to cemeteries of ancient foundation. Accordingly, it seems safe to suggest that they functioned as the settings of rituals centred upon food manipulation and/or drinking ceremonies, which were aimed at commemorating the dead as ancestors. At the same time, these three buildings seem to embody a substantial change in the long history of the ritual of inverting vases, since they clearly attest to the participation of very large groups at a supra-household level. This seems to imply that the memory of common ancestors was periodically celebrated to reinforce the inter-generational bond, which enhanced cohesion within communities. If this is correct, one can contend that the memory of ancestors at a household level probably had a private character, taking place inside

Table 5. Contexts of Inverted Vases in Minoan Cemeteries and Settlements

Cemeteries	Settlements
Building Deposit	Building Deposit
Primary and secondary burial	Floor assemblage
Bench shrines annexed to the tombs	Free-standing shrines
Free-standing building	Free-standing building

the houses and far from the cemeteries. Eventually, such a tendency over time seems to be confirmed by the discovery of inverted vases both under and above the floors in domestic buildings of the Postpalatial period, as in the cases of Hagia Triada, Palaikastro and Sissi by LM IIIA2-B.

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A Minoan ‘*chytros*’?
Unexpected archaeological evidence for the possible pre-historic origin of an ancient Greek ceremonial practice

Lefteris Platon

The aim of the present chapter is to discuss the function of a peculiar clay vessel from Minoan Zakros, which has recently been completely restored (Petrakos 2013: 94). It deals with a vase similar in form to a common tripod cooking pot, but which bears on its exterior, on both sides, a number of successive horizontal rows of small cupules, densely disposed (Figure 1). This feature connects it directly with the category of ‘*kernoi*’, well known from several Minoan sites, e.g. ceremonial objects functioning as bearers of symbolic offerings and having close parallels among ancient Greek Eleusinian religious vessels (e.g. Mitsopoulou 2007: 472-477).

On the basis of the above, the Zakrian vessel combines a probably ceremonial object, the form of which is defined by a religious symbolism, with an ordinary domestic pot the shape of which shows its specific function: the boiling of water or food. On the other hand, the excavation context of the vessel reveals little about its meaning and/or function. According to the preliminary excavation report and diaries, it was found in fragments dispersed in two groups, in a relatively small room of a building lying to one side of the ‘Harbour Road’, which constituted the main approach to the settlement from the sea (Figure 2; Platon 1979: 308-310). From the same area come fragments of a wine jug, as well as pieces from the bodies and legs of cooking pots, fragments of buckets, basins and cups, and a vase with a hole in its bottom (Platon 1979: 309). The preliminary study of the pottery dates this assemblage to the end of the ‘Zakros IV’ chronological phase, equated roughly with the MMIIIB-LMIA period, which ends with a great, probably geological, destruction of the site (Gerondakou 2011: 259-261; Platon 1999: 677-680).

To explore the possible function of the object under discussion we must return to its morphology. Firstly, its size, 52.4 cm in height with a mouth width of 26.9 cm, suggests that its contents, if food, were for a relatively large group of people, certainly larger than a nuclear family. The comparison of the vessel to other similarly shaped cooking pots also found in Zakros is strongly indicative: it appears to be almost double the height of most, with almost similar proportions between height and width, so suggesting a capacity four times larger (Figure 3). Consequently, the main function of the vessel could not be purely symbolic, since it appears to have been created for some especially increased needs in comparison to the ordinary vessels.

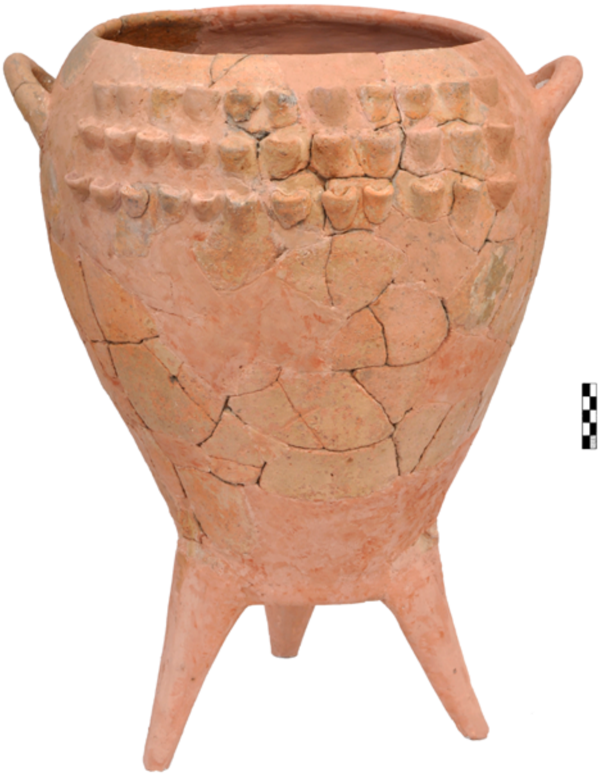
Figure 1. The tripod vessel from Zakros.

In the context of both Creto-Mycenaean and ancient Greek religions, the ceremonial use of kernoi has been marked out by several old and recent studies (Bakalakis 1991; Clinton 2009; Ellis Jones 1982; Karagianni 1984; Kourouniotis 1898; Mitsopoulou 2007; Mitsopoulou 2010: 53-54; Pollit 1979; Xanthoudides 1905-1906). It has long been considered (Xanthoudides 1905-1906: 19-20) that such objects, having as their basic feature the numerous, equal-sized, small cavities or, as in this case, cupules, were used for the ‘panspermia’, namely the simultaneous offering of symbolic portions of all the cultivated goods to the deities of fertility in order to protect and favour agricultural production. Nevertheless, it remains doubtful if these offerings were actually placed in every case in the small cavities or cupules of the kernoi, since the minimal capacity of several specimens, including the Zakrian vessel, would be a serious obstacle for such a use (Figure 4).

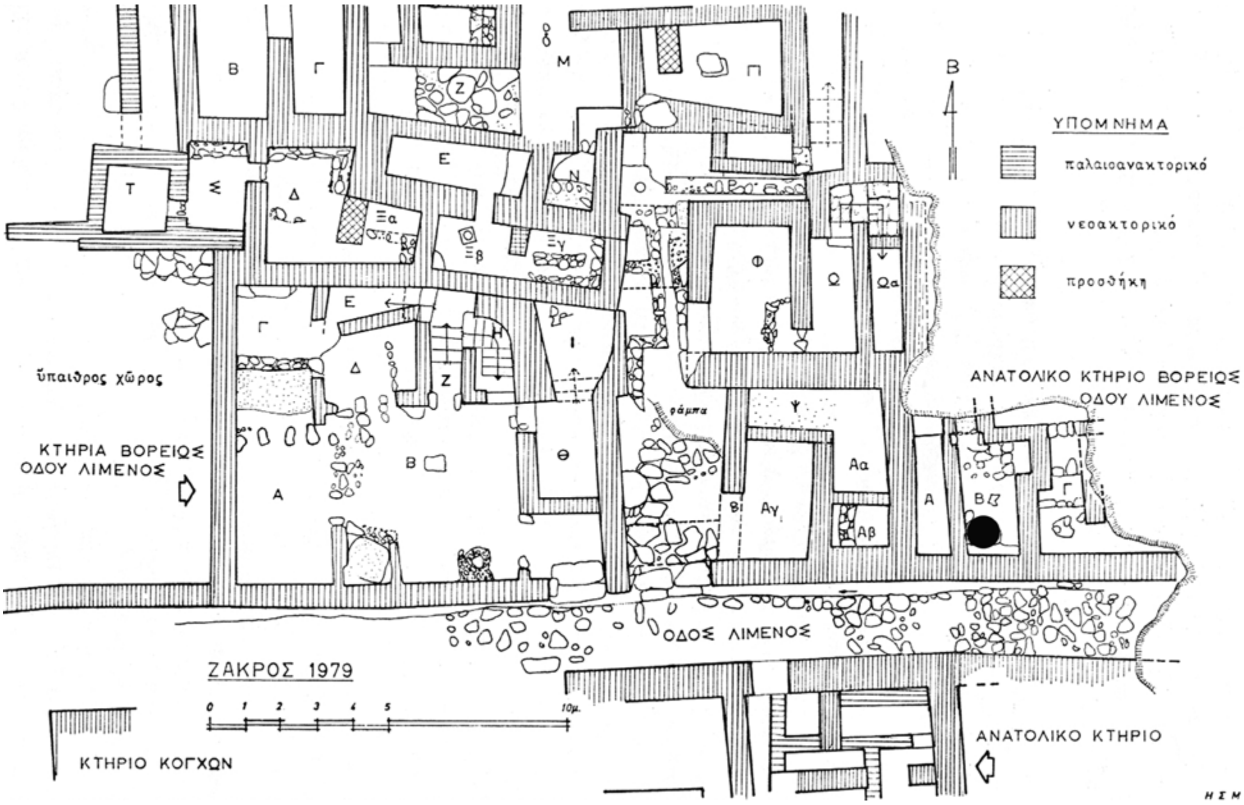
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Figure 2. Plan of the Minoan settlement of Zakros, on which the precise find spot of the tripod vessel is marked.

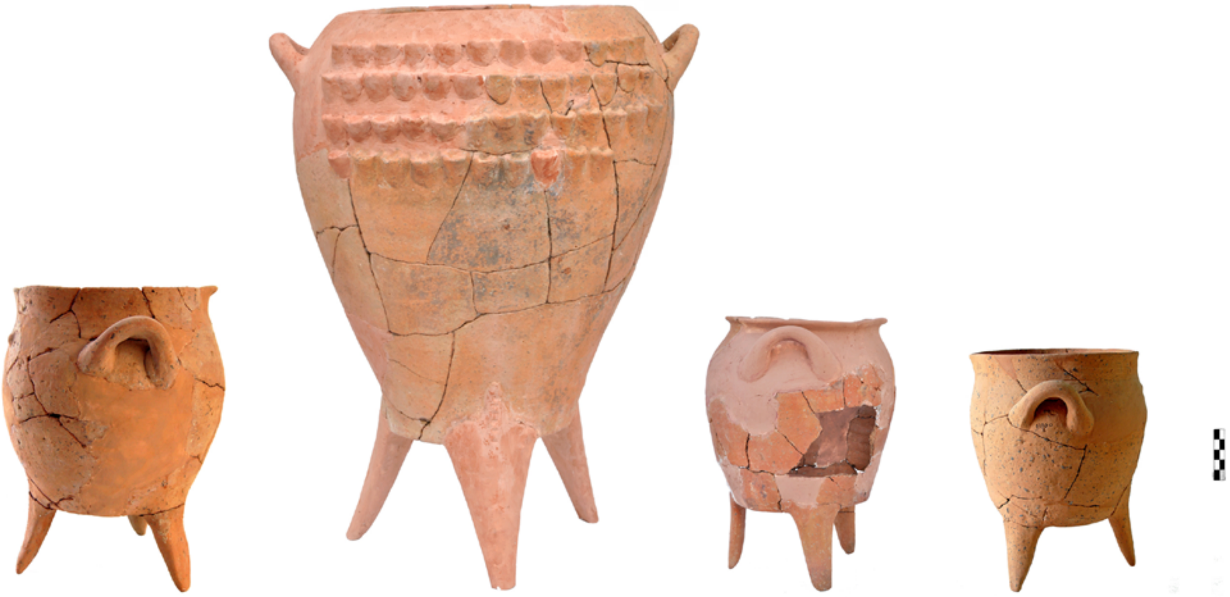

Figure 3. Photo presenting a comparison of the vessel under discussion to other cooking pots found also in Zakros.

It has been suggested that the composite Attic Eleusinian vessel, which, with the addition of small cupules to the simple variant, comes closer to the form of the prehistoric kernoi (Ellis Jones 1982: 192; Mitsopoulou 2007: 472-477; Pollitt 1979: 209), was used for the processional transportation and consumption of the ‘kykeon’ (Delatte 1955; Mitsopoulou 2007: 533, 798-819), e.g. a mixture based on boiled wheat and wine, usually with grated goat cheese or honey added (Kerényi 1991; Clinton 2009; Mitsopoulou 2010, 50 and n. 46 with farther bibliography). This mixture was obviously placed inside the vessel and so the small cupules should be considered purely symbolic. So too in the case of the Zakrian vessel, it is reasonable to suggest that the foods to be offered were placed inside the receptacle, since this was to be heated for

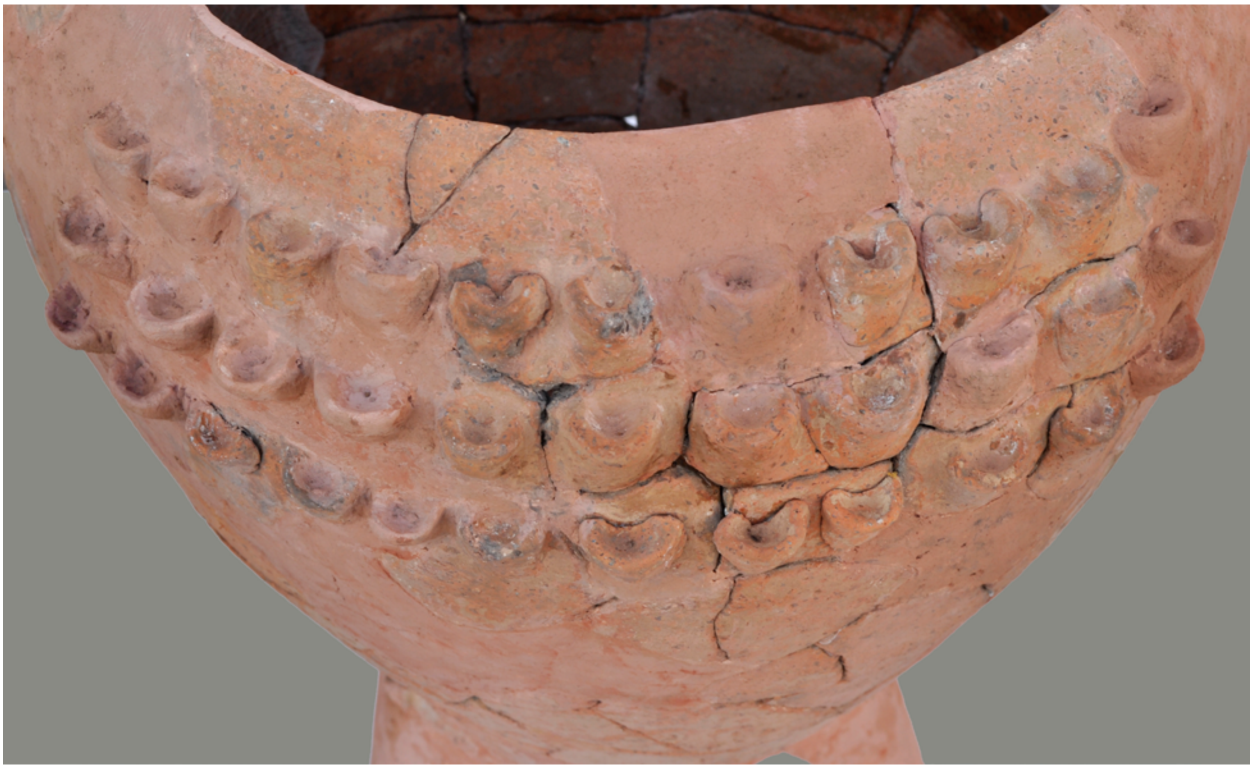

Figure 4. Detail of the cupules of the Zakrian vessel.

their further processing. The shape of the vessel, with great depth and an inverted rim creating a slightly restricted opening, suggests the safe stirring of a fluid mixture (Figure 5, Rice 1987: 239-240). In other words, we have to do with the boiling of a mixture, which probably contained vegetable materials the great variety of which was declared to the participants in the ceremony by the many similar small cupules stuck on the exterior of the vessel.

We know that some of the Minoan cooking pots were probably used for the preparation of ceremonial meals to be consumed during religious banquets. Such vases have been identified in the Central Building of Kastelli Pediadha (Rethemiotakis 1992: 49, 56-60) and in the country-villa at Kephali Lazana Viannos (Platon 1960: 285-286), in both cases in direct connection with vases used for drinking and offering, but also with built structures to which the ceremony activities were directed. Moreover, at Kephali Lazana a sherd of a pot used for carrying solid food, probably a kind of basin or cooking pot, preserved part of an incised sign which is probably that of the double axe. One more double axe was also incised after firing on a domestic vessel, probably a cooking pot, found in House Δα at Zakros (Platon 2005: 123). Nevertheless, while in these cases use of the cooking pots for the preparation of meals to be consumed during religious banquets appears possible, there is no evidence that whatever was cooked in them had a special composition considered as a 'sacred food'.

Here, rather unexpected help comes from literary sources referring to ceremonial practices of classical Greece. From them, the earliest being a short reference of chronological class found in Aristophanes' *Acharneis* (Ach. 1076), we learn that the third of the three days of the *Anthesteria* festival was called '*Chytroi*'. Anthesteria, one of the four Athenian festivals in honour of Dionysus held annually for three days, the eleventh to thirteenth of the month of *Anthesterion* (the January/February full moon), was considered by the Athenians themselves as a very ancient festival (Burkert 1985: 237-242; Hamilton 1992: 5-62, 149-172; Hatzopoulos 2010: 286-294).This is supported by the fact that it was also celebrated in all the Ionian cities, so it must have preceded the Ionian migration of the late eleventh or early tenth century BC.

Overall, the festival was related to the fertility of earth and people and principally had a chthonic character. During the first day, named '*Pithoigia*', the ceremonial action was centred on the opening and consecration of the contents of the wine pithoi, in which the production of the previous autumn had been stored. The second day was called '*Choes*', taking its name from a specific type of pot, having a wide egg-shaped body, short neck and trefoil mouth. This small-sized vessel was used in drink-off matches, the winner being he who drained his cup most rapidly. The fertility dimension of the festival is suggested by a 'sacral marriage' ('*hierogamy*'), during the same, second, day, in which the wife ('*basilinna*') of the grand master ('*archon basileus*') participated. Finally, the third day, '*Chytroi*', with the word referring directly

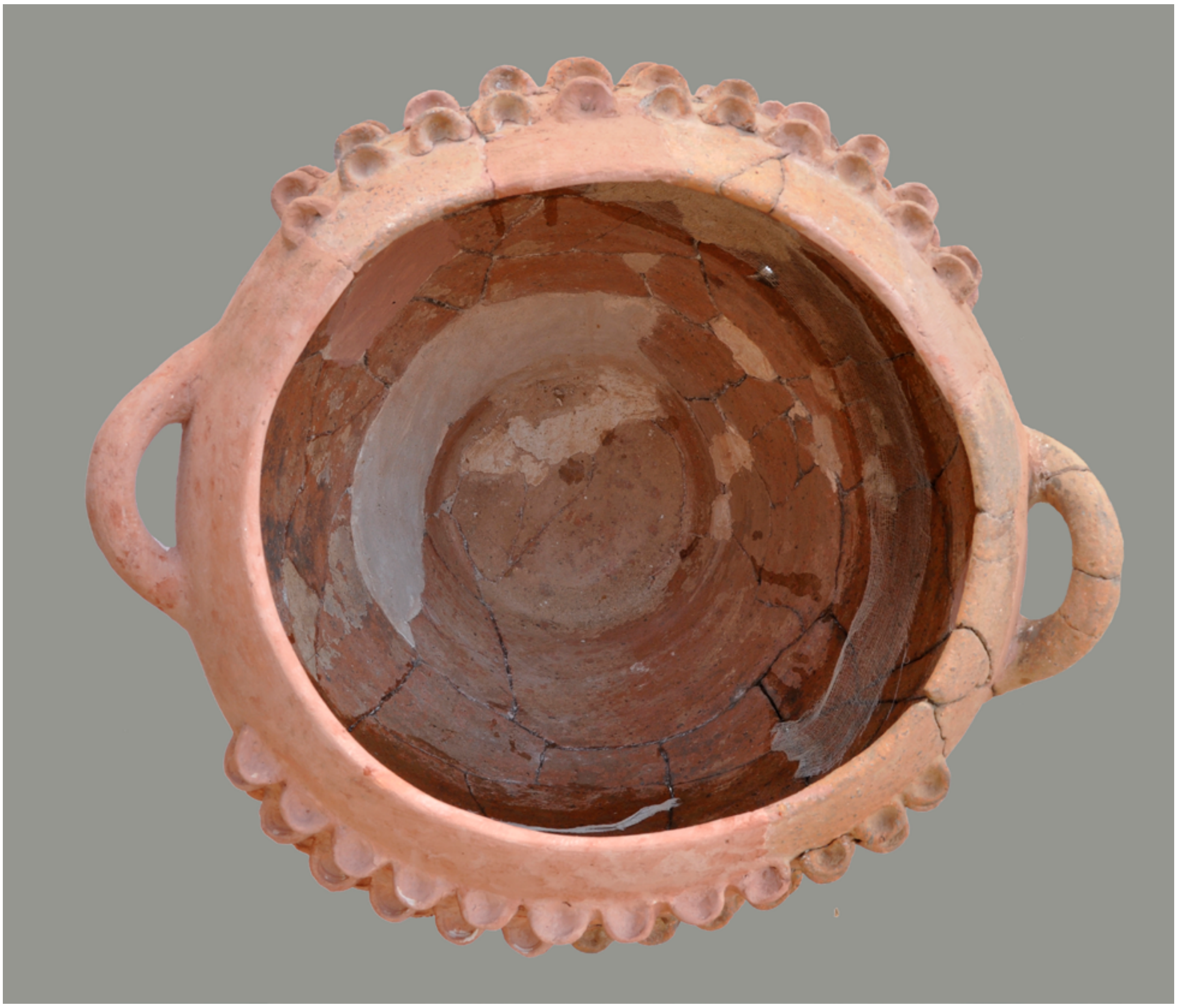

Figure 5. The restricted opening of the vessel, shown from above.

to the use of cooking pots (‘*chytrai*’) for the preparation of the sacral food, culminated in the offering of cooked pulses (‘*panspermia*’) to *Hermes Chthonios*, or, according other scholars, with its consumption by the participants of the festival. The proverbial ancient Greek phrase ‘θύραζε Κάρες, ουκέτ΄ Ανθεστήρια› (‘Out of doors, Kares! It is no longer *Anthesteria*’), which ended the festival according to the ancient sources, probably connects the *chytroi* ceremony with an attempt to expel the souls of the dead from the city, who had been there from the time of the opening of the wine casks (Burkert 1985: 240).

The connection of the cooked ‘*panspermia*’ with the souls of the dead appears to be a diachronic practice. One could, for example, refer to the ‘*kollyva*’ consumed during memorial masses of the Orthodox Church. It probably deals with a prehistoric custom, something which is also supported by the frequent finding of cooking pots in Minoan tombs. According to W. Burkert (1985: 240), this food is also related to the ‘myth of the flood’. When the waters withdrew, the survivors put in cauldrons and cooked whatever they could find after the destruction and offered sacrifice for the dead to *Hermes Chthonios*, eating from the cooking pots, believing that in this way they would regain life.

Although Harrison (1903: 37-38), and recently other scholars (Hatzopoulos 2010: 293-294 and n. 1706), debated the origin of the name of the *chytroi* ceremony from the cooking pots, using as their basic argument the reference of the noun in the masculine gender, the ancient literary sources are clear. In the valuable work of Photios, ‘*Lexeon Synagogi*’, which used as sources older, now lost, ancient Greek lexicons, under the entry ‘*Thargelia*’, which refers to a festival dedicated to the twin gods Apollo and Artemis, the following is written (Phot. Lex. 79: 23-26): ‘ο των σπερμάτων μεστός χύτρος ιερού εψέματος. Ήψουν δε εν αυτήι απαρχάς τω θεώι των πεφηνότων καρπών› (‘*the chytros full of seeds of the sacred mash; for they used to boil in it to the god the first-fruits of the crops*’).

Based on all this, the Zakrian vessel could be called '*chytros*', since its morphology suggests a use very similar to that reported for the '*chytroi*' of the ancient Greek literature sources. Nevertheless, one could consider it risky to 'transport' religious beliefs and ceremonies of classical antiquity to Bronze Age Crete based exclusively on the discovery of a single vessel. Moreover, if the preparation of the cooked '*panspermia*' constituted an integral part of an annually repeated Minoan festival, then why have we not identified to date, in the numerous Cretan excavations, more vessels similar to the Zakros *chytros*? One answer is that common cooking pots may have been used, or, for more collective activities, bronze, usually tripod, cauldrons, a representative specimen of which comes from the Late Minoan cemetery at Archanes (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 593-594, fig. 614). The religious-ceremonial use of tripod cauldrons in Minoan Crete is supported by the miniature imitation of such a vessel placed on the top of a peculiar clay object also from Zakros (Platon 1967: 170; Platon 1990; Platon 2008), which shares several morphological features with the tube-like kernoi (Bignasca 2000; Mitsopoulou 2007: 367-376, pl. 1).

In the field of Aegean Bronze Age iconography, there are two possible examples showing the preparation of the sacred mash in the context of a religious ceremony or festival. The first – and least safe – is one of the scenes drawn on the well-known sarcophagus of Hagia Triada (Long 1974; Paribeni 1908). On the left of the scene representing the offerings to the dead, female figures, one of which is identified by some as a queen, are carrying and emptying the contents of buckets, carried on their shoulders by rods, into a big vessel similar to a crater or cooking pot. Most scholars interpret this representation as the offering of libations (Long 1974: 35-43; Nilsson 1950: 428). Nevertheless, the types of the represented vessels are not those normally used for liquid offerings, while the whole spirit of the scene suggests preparation for, rather than the climax of, a ceremonial action. So, it is possible that in the cooking pot-like vessel a mixture is being prepared either to be offered to the dead later or to be placed on the altar of the chthonian deity together with the other non-blood offerings, as in the scene represented on the other long side of sarcophagus. It should be added here that a similar vase appears on a seal from Naxos (CMS V.2: 483, nr. 608), depicted together with libation vessels above an offering table, probably also indicating the dedication of solid offerings to the deity.

The second – and even more important – iconographical evidence occurs on a wall-painting from the Late Cycladic settlement at Hagia Irini, Kea (Morgan 1998: 204, fig. 6; Morgan 2007: 119). Here, at a sea-shore site approached by a fleet of ships, some scenes from the preparation of a festival seem to be depicted, among which is one of cooking inside big tripod cooking pots. Considering the topography of Minoan Zakros, with the sea at that time reaching the southern side of the 'Harbour Road' (Guttandin *et al.* 2011: 144-149, figs 246-249), such a scene could have very well been repeated there and the use of the *chytros* in a similar feasting activity would be an attractive possibility, though not absolutely proved. Another attractive hypothesis is that the *chytros* ceremony at Zakros is connected with a rise in water levels after the geological destruction at the end of the 'Zakros IV' chronological phase (Platon 1999: 679).

However, if the Athenian festival of '*Chytroi*' really originates from similar religious practices known in Bronze Age Crete, then it is possible that more ceremonies included in *Anthesteria* also had their roots in prehistoric practices. For the opening of the wine casks in Zakros, some indications are offered by the finds of Building Z, a structure which was probably exclusively dedicated to the production and storage of wine (Platon 2002: 20). This building, apart from a complete wine-press installation (Kopaka and Platon 1993: 97-101; Platon 1988: 229-236, fig. 3), also had a spacious magazine with pithoi (Platon 1963: 165) and a large hall for social activities provided with an impressive pier-and-door partition ('*polythyron*'), unique for the buildings lying outside the palace limits (Platon 1987: 310-311). The consecration of the wine is confirmed by the presence of two offering tables, one in the form of a small column (Platon 1963: 165, pl. 142β; Platon 1974: 58, fig. 29; Platon and Pararas 1991: 17, pl. 6:26, figs 11-13), and by the decoration of a big pithos with double axes (Platon 1988: 232; Platon and Platon 1991: pl. 222a; Saliaka 2008). Finally, the possible organization of wine drink-off matches inside the limits of the palace itself is supported by the discovery of eight identical miniature jugs, together with eleven amphorae, in the so-called 'Banquet Hall' (Platon 1974: 157-160; Platon 2002: 20, fig. 22). The absence of finds indicating preparation or consumption of food weakens the hypothesis that real banquets took place here (Platon 1974: 158).

However, the Athenian *Chytroi* was a folk festival, in which even the slaves were allowed to participate. According to ancient literary sources, it was forbidden for the priests to taste the contents of the cooking pots, which were in any case connected with the food of the dead (Burkert 1985: 240, n. 25). So, the discovery of the Zakros *chytros* in a non-palatial and not exclusively religious context appears to be justified and expected. The vessel was probably in storage inside a specific house of this quarter of the town, to be used probably once only during the year in a folk festival of symbolic purification and invocation of the fertility of the earth.

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Metamorphoses and hybridity in the wall-paintings at Akrotiri, Thera

Annette Højen Sørensen, Walter L. Friedrich and Kirsten Molly Søholm

Introduction

Akrotiri on Thera is the most spectacular Bronze Age town in Greece. About 30-35 houses are known, but only a few have been fully excavated. The houses are decorated with colourful frescoes with highly elaborate narrative scenes depicting nature and the human world. Since the beginning of the systematic excavation of Akrotiri in 1967 by Spyridon Marinatos, many ideas have been put forward concerning the interpretation of the well-known and spectacular frescoes and of the painted pottery (Indicatively see S. Marinatos 1968-1976, N. Marinatos 1984, 1993, 2013, Morgan 1988, Immerwahr 1990, Televantou 1990, Doumas 1992 and more recently Ferrence and Bendersky 2004, Watrous 2007 and Vlachopoulos 2007; 2010; 2015). All the above contributions have covered many aspects of the Theran frescoes, and interpretations based on their content range significantly, from religious feasts (e.g. N. Marinatos 1993 and Vlachopoulos 2007; 2010) to secular events (e.g. Doumas 1992). Several interpretations of the frescoes see influences from the Eastern Mediterranean cultural spheres while others explore the cross-fertilization of motifs and ideas and between different artistic media, such as ceramics and seals (see particularly the two large conferences: 'The Wall Paintings of Thera,' Sherratt 2000; 'Paintbrushes,' Vlachopoulos 2013).

Despite the interpretative diversity, it is currently established that at least some of the wall-paintings might be connected to the ideas and religious practices of the people who inhabited the houses that featured them, such as Xeste 3, the West House, Building Beta and the House of the Ladies. Consequently, religious practices seem to have spread throughout the town and were not centralized in one building. It may then be plausibly suggested that religious and secular life were not separated into watertight spheres (Cf. also Vlachopoulos 2010). This suggestion is accentuated by the fact that these wall-paintings mirror only parts of the rituals that happened at Akrotiri, since we might well be lacking expressions through other media such as the sound of songs and recitations, dancing and social acts like eating and drinking. Given then the widespread distribution of ritual at Akrotiri and, consequently, its strong social dimension, the question becomes, is it possible to deduce widely shared and thus popular metaphysical narratives, cultic and other ritual practises from the motifs featured in the frescoes?

The social dimension of religion and ritual

The above emphasis on the social role of ritual activity at Akrotiri chimes well with Jan Assmann's (1992 and 2000) approach to religion as representing values and world views that are characteristic of a specific community and lending the world meaning and interpretation. According to the same line of argument, religion creates the cultural identity of the community. Depending on social structures and natural conditions, communities develop narratives as explanations to life, the afterlife and the nature surrounding them. Such narratively constructed senses of cultural identity constitute very important components for the survival of the community, and these senses are ascribed holiness through religious and -more widely ritual-practices.

Rituals and myths are recognizable constructions that are repeated over and over again. They serve to make religion visible to people in the community. An example is the saffron gathering in Xeste 3 which might depict an annual ritual (Figure 1). Rituals might also serve as a stronghold of cultural cohesion. Rituals keep the world turning, and they also serve to keep track of the yearly rhythms and to construct a difference between everyday life and special events like feasts. An example of this may be found in the procession of ships in Room 5 of the West House.

Furthermore, the frescoes from Akrotiri may be seen as carrying important messages in connection with the Late Bronze Age community, their rituals and their beliefs in the repetitive cycles of life and death and the intertwining of continuity and change in life, including the transformation of a person from child to adult. The strong focus of fresco iconography on natural and social lifecycles is not surprising given the general emphasis of Minoan and, by extension, Theran religious beliefs on nature (e.g. N. Marinatos 1993). This emphasis allows the suggestion that the depiction of natural lifecycles operated as a metaphor of social lifecycles, while the latter also made reference to the former.

Metamorphosis and hybridity

In our approach we will focus on how this view of life is expressed in the Theran frescoes and more specifically, through the ways in which their main decorative themes

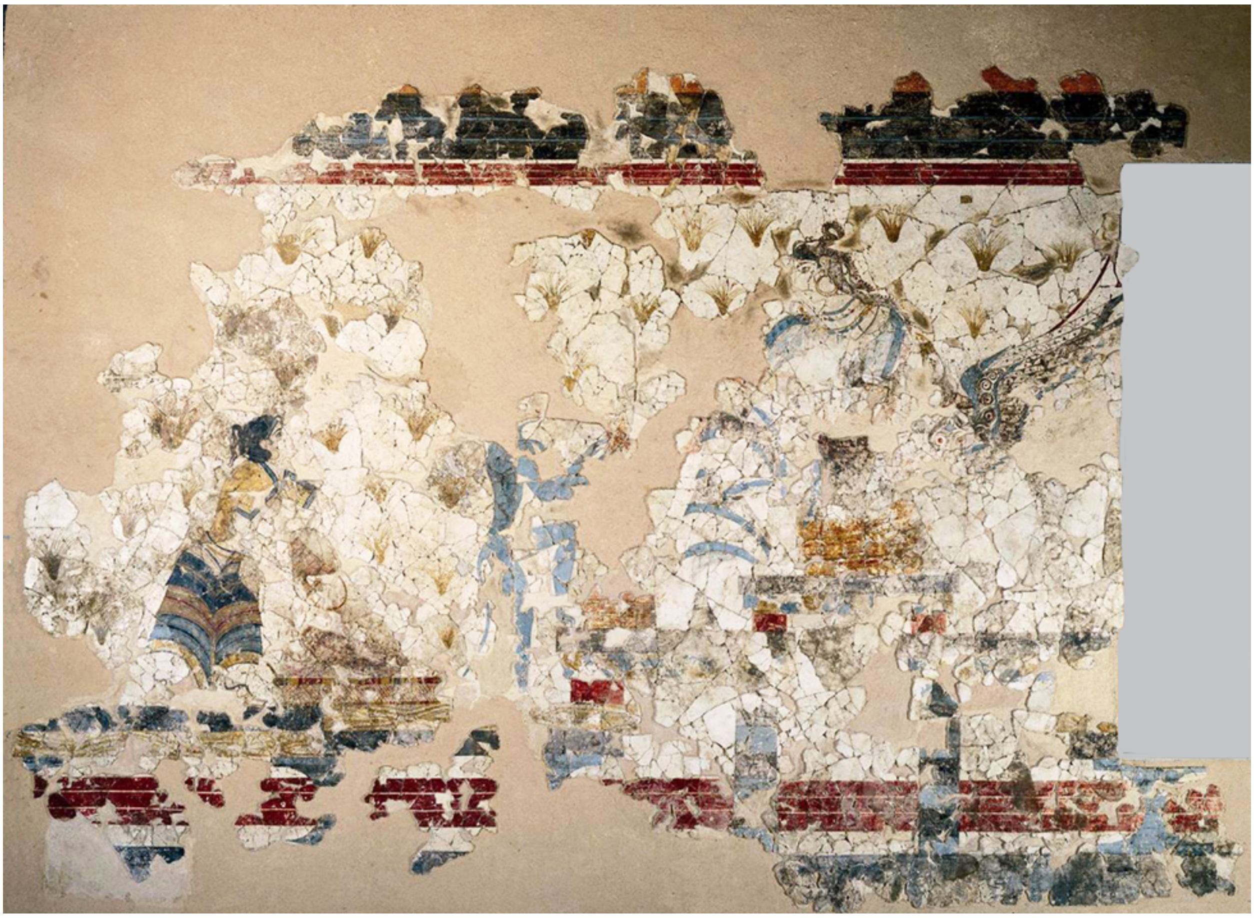

Figure 1. Saffron gatherer, monkey, goddess and griffin from Xeste 3, first floor. Courtesy of Christos Doumas.
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express the concepts of *metamorphosis* and hybridity. Metamorphosis, the Greek word for transformation, is a concept that expresses movement, continuity, repetitiveness and the connectivity of all the elements in the world. Metamorphosis is antithetic to dualistic thinking since it has no room for contradictions or 'either/or' binary oppositions, as everything changes and nothing disappears (Cf. also Sørensen 2015). In cultural studies, metamorphosis is related to the ways in which new forms emerge continuously, as different entities become mixed together.

In order for metamorphosis to happen, the in-between space of the mixed entities becomes significantly empowered. The process of metamorphosis then entails a dominant stage of hybridity, which has become a focal point in post-colonial cultural studies as a corner stone in transcultural theories (Bhaba 1994). It has been argued that the attempt of colonial powers to transform and westernize local cultures led to the formation of in-between spaces and hybrid social formations. The concept of hybridity has been recently adapted to the studies of prehistoric cultures (Stockhammer 2012). Joseph Maran (2012) argues that the concept of cultural hybridity can be an eye-opener in the study of Prehistory, as it appreciates the heterogeneity of ideas, social forms and concepts of worlds which are the results of cultural encounters.

Maran employs hybridity to account for the survival of palatial cultural features after the fall of the Mycenaean elites at the very end of the Bronze Age. The same concept has been used to understand the mixing of Aegean elements in Philistine culture, roughly during the same period. It may also be argued that metamorphosis with its hybridity are key concepts for understanding the wider Minoan cognitive world. For example, it has been suggested that the Egyptian goddess Taweret was imported into Minoan Crete and transformed into the well-known genius (Weingarten 1991). The seals crafted by the so-called Zakro Master depict human-animal and human-bird hybrids (Weingarten 1983).

We do not know exactly how the Minoans understood the metamorphoses of life, namely how they understood the concept of constant and dynamic transformation in relation to natural and social repetitive lifecycles. Nevertheless, we know of a great many metamorphoses in Graeco-Roman mythology. Metamorphoses are common motifs in myths and folk literature all over the world. Many myths connected to creation tell about transformation. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the shapeless void (chaos) transforms into cosmic structure. Many gods can transform into flora and fauna as we read in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

Within the Akrotiri frescoes there are elements pointing to metamorphic thinking of life. These elements are quite evident in motifs of flora, fauna, mythology and scenes from human life. It is possible to argue then that dynamic thinking seems to be predominant at Akrotiri, as in the world of metamorphoses new hybrids are constantly created and nothing has a final shape. These points are discussed in detail below.

Flora

Crocuses and lilies are favoured depictions in Minoan iconography and both flowers are depicted in what seem to be ritual scenes, for instance in Xeste 3. Here two scenes are related to a period in which the crocus flowers bloom on Thera from November to December. On the ground floor, three girls are depicted in a rocky landscape with crocus flowers. On the first floor a scene depicting saffron gathering girls and a seated goddess are shown. A girl is bringing saffron to a large basket in front of the goddess.

The scene with the saffron gatherers can be interpreted as the epiphany of the goddess of the regenerative powers of nature. Crocuses or lilies transform from a bulb lying dormant in the ground all year until, just after rain has fallen, they bloom and briefly reveal their vivid colours and spread their scent. In the wall paintings, these flowers are thus loaded with a deep symbolic meaning – they might be symbolizing a cyclical manner of thinking, their ritual responses to the metamorphisms of nature.

Fauna

Another example of nature's metamorphoses is the dragonfly which is depicted on several frescoes at Akrotiri. For example, it is found on one of the necklaces of the goddess in Xeste 3 (Figure 1). Dragonflies lay their eggs in or near water and their larvae, the naiads, live under water for a long time until they are ready to crawl onto a plant above water where they dry under the sun. Then their skin cracks and the fully-grown dragonflies emerge. Apart from these animals being part of a spectacular set of metamorphoses they also have the ability to live in water and fly in the air and as a such they feature a hybrid way of life that unites two different forces of nature.

Another example is the butterfly. It represents three metamorphoses from egg to caterpillar, caterpillar to cocoon and from cocoon to butterfly. Butterflies are depicted on the ships in the Ship Fresco and, beyond Akrotiri, in Cretan seals (Shapland 2010). Butterflies are often connected to a water theme, and like birds they unite earth and sky. The monkey is in a sense a hybrid creature that bridges the gap between humans and animals. In the frescoes of Xeste 3 they are seen performing human activities such as dancing, playing lyre and presenting gifts to the goddess (Doumas 1992). The monkey may be a figure which was able to connect to the sacred in the metamorphic world.

Griffin: a mythological creature

Next to the floral and faunal motifs the mythological creature of the griffin represents transformation and hybridity. The griffin appears at least twice in the wall paintings of Thera. In the West House frescoes a griffin is present in the depiction of a river on the upper part of the east wall in Room 5. A griffin is also shown behind the goddess in Xeste 3. Like the monkey just mentioned, the griffin is also a popular motif in the iconography of the Eastern Mediterranean during the Bronze Age. The griffin is a figure which for Mayor (2000) was based on paleontological findings of dinosaur skeletons, and Shank (2013) has recently interpreted the griffin as a symbol of power in the Late Bronze Age.

Be that as it may, the griffin above all has a hybrid nature because it combines two animals: the lion and the bird of prey. In Xeste 3, the two hybrid figures (griffin and monkey) are flanking the seated goddess which herself may be taken to be a hybrid being with a human form and appearance and a metaphysical essence and status. The combination of hybrid creatures would facilitate ritual activity as the latter prompts its participants to leave the world of mundane activity and enter a liminal state of being, betwixt and between. This liminal stage allows people to review, re-negotiate and transform the structures of social life by reference to and under the protection of a divine power.

The element of water

If we consider Room 5 of the West House as a unit we may observe a ritualized landscape representing an important and, to the people of the Aegean, essential force of life: water in its many guises. Here the miniature paintings on the four walls of the room bring up the significance of water as an element. The north wall fresco is rather fragmented but represents two related themes: In one scene women collect water from a cave spring and water is signified as life giving. In a second scene, featuring a shipwreck with drowned men water is life taking. The east wall shows a river with flora and fauna whereas the west wall has not been preserved. On the south wall a procession of ships is depicted sailing from left to right between two harbour towns probably

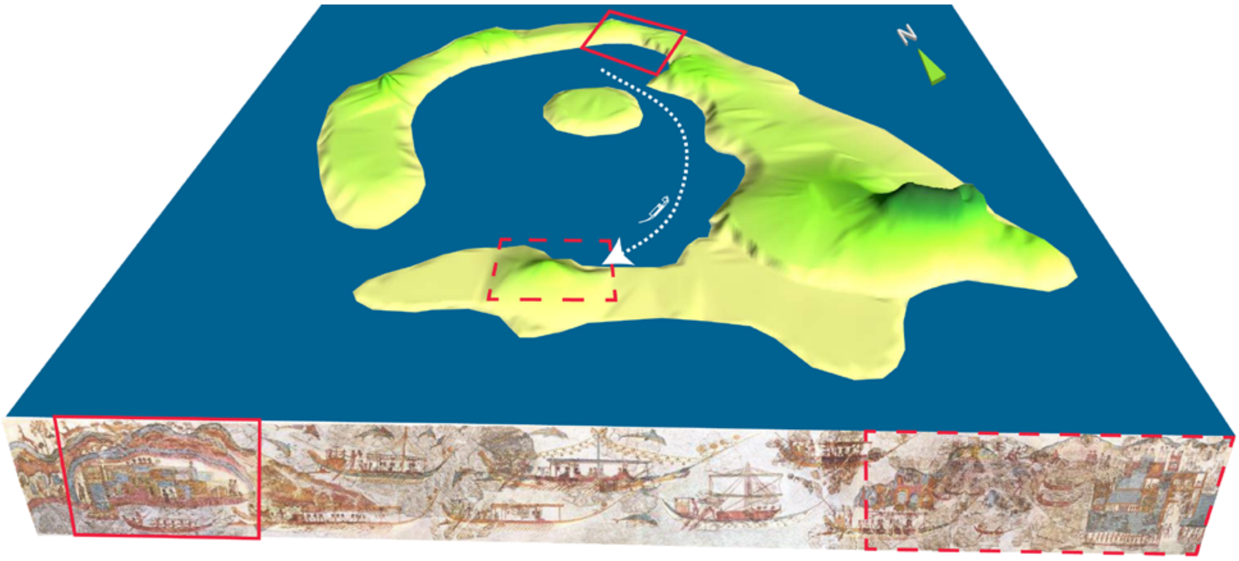

Figure 2. Reconstructed route shown in the Ship Fresco, West House Room 5. Photo courtesy of Christos Doumas. © Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund. Reconstruction by Walter L. Friedrich.

within the Santorini caldera (Figure 2; Friedrich and Sørensen 2010 and Friedrich et al. 2014).

The general theme of water in the frescoes of the West House has already been discussed in detail elsewhere (Sørensen et al. 2013). Water is the only element which is able to exist in three forms: solid as ice, liquid as water and gas as vapour. In addition, it can be both salty and fresh, it can give and take life, it can connect and separate, and it may hamper or promote the transportation of goods and people. All these different aspects of water are present in the frescoes of Room 5 and whoever was able to stand in the middle of this room and view the frescoes would be able to gain a sense of the water transforming from one type of element to another, while water as a whole would emerge as a multi-faceted and thus hybrid entity.

In our opinion the Ship Fresco shows a ritual feast relating to the appearance of rain. The water flowing down the caldera walls and surrounding the left harbour represents the rainy season, that is a prerequisite for fertility and thus for survival of the community. Rain is not only one more case of metamorphosis related to water, but it also points towards the regeneration of nature through water. As such, its manifestations symbolise the dynamic and metamorphic principle of the way of thinking of the wider Minoan world regarding the unending cycle of life.

The human sphere

The metamorphoses of humans may be sought in case of age transformation. One of them is the transformation from child to adult, which is a central transition in a person's life. In ancient societies it was crucial for the future existence of the family and the community. This principle of human metamorphosis may be seen in Xeste 3 (see Vlachopoulos 2008 for a detailed description of the frescoes), where three girls are depicted in a rocky landscape (Figure 3). On the east wall an ashlar wall is painted with a shrine with bloody horns of consecration and, according to the latest reconstruction by Doumas (2008) and Vlachopoulos (2007; 2010), an olive tree is seen between the horns.

According to Nanno Marinatos (1984) and Andreas Vlachopoulos (2010) the scene with the three girls and the horns of consecration is related to rites of initiation. Vlachopoulos (2010: 179-180) is even more detailed in his interpretation. He suggests that the scene illustrates three different female figures: The girl to the right is seen as a young bride, the woman in the middle is seen as a divine figure who symbolizes the archetypical female femininity and who initiates the young bride. The woman to the left, according to Vlachopoulos, is bringing a bridal gift for the young woman.

But it is possible to interpret the scene in a different way, although still within the general thematic framework of initiation rites. The three girl-figures on the north wall may be a depiction of the same girl who undergoes initiation rites for three different age stages. The figure to the right is moving towards the left but looks back towards the sanctuary. She is wearing a veil and has a coiffure which has been interpreted as indicative of childhood (cf. Vlachopoulos 2010: 179 for references). The figure in the middle represents a second age stage. She is sitting on a rock with crocus flowers behind her. She is holding her head and blood is dripping from her

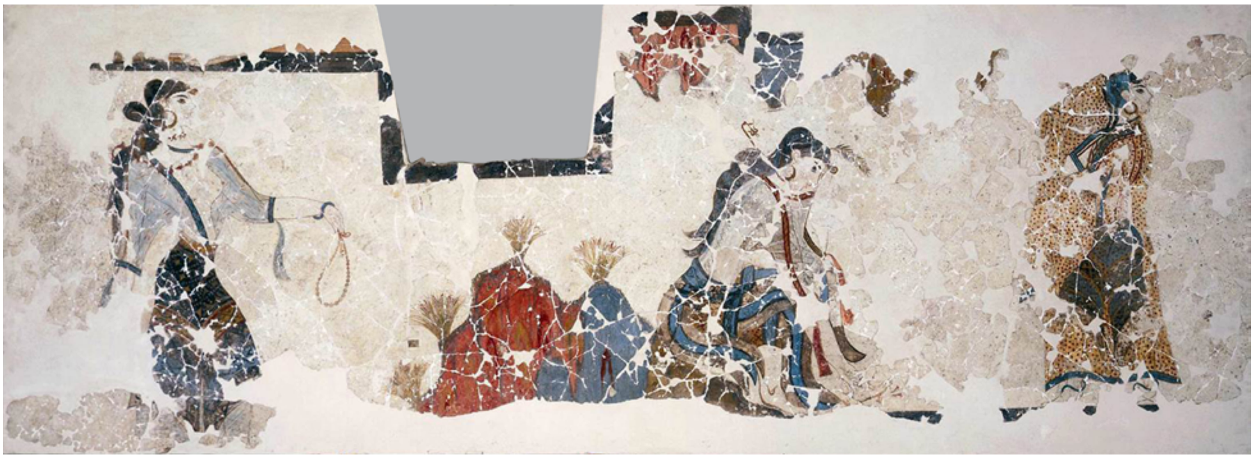

Figure 3: Initiation scene from Xeste 3, ground floor. Courtesy of Christos Doumas. © Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund.

left foot. Below her foot are the stigmas of crocus plants. She has long hair that is decorated with an olive branch and a lily. The figure on the left is moving towards the right. She represents the third phase of the narration and is wearing a typical Minoan dress which exposes her breast. The upper part of the dress is decorated with crocuses, and she is wearing a wreath made of crocuses around her neck. She is holding a pearl necklace in her left hand.

The three scenes can be also interpreted as one single iconographic narration, in a way much like a modern cartoon, which is read from right to left and concerns a religious feast: the initiation of a sexually mature girl either because she has reached the stage of menstruation or due to defloration, hence the blood on the horns of consecration and the blood on the foot of the figure in the middle of the scene. The figure to the right shows in this interpretation the first phase prior to her initiation, the figure in the middle represents the second phase where she has just been through the menstruation or defloration rite, and the figure on the left shows the result of this ritual process; a grown-up woman who now carries fertility as symbolized by the crocus. This interpretation suggests that young girls had to undergo a painful ritual metamorphosis so as to be initiated into the stage of reproduction, where they were both able and allowed to create new life and, in this way, trigger new processes of metamorphosis.

Abstract representations of metamorphoses

Doumas (2008), Vlachopoulos (2007; 2010) and Marinatos (2013) have recently published more paintings from Xeste 3, among these the fresco with the spirals that apparently stem from the second floor of the house (Figure 4). These spirals are giant, the size of a man, but what do they represent? Do they show Egyptian sun symbols borrowed from the Egyptian cultural sphere (Marinatos 2013) or something else? Whatever the exact symbolic content of this theme, on this floor – the third level of the building - the narration reaches its climax: here the spirals fill the entire wall as they occur in different sizes and colours and run both vertically and horizontally (Sepetzoglou 2013). One undoubted characteristic of this fresco is the dynamism of the spirals which evokes the notion of perpetual movement. It is plausible to suggest that the principle of metamorphoses seems to be represented here in an overwhelming abstract graphical manner. The aesthetic expression of this fresco is the principle of total transformation; here everything flows (Πάντα ῥεῖ).

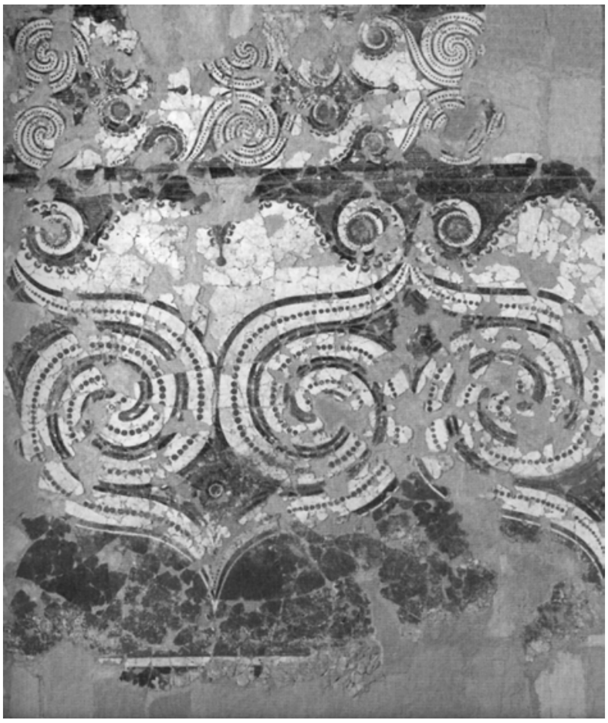

Figure 4. Spirals from Xeste 3, second floor. Courtesy of Christos Doumas. © Ephorate of Antiquities of the Cyclades, Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports/Archaeological Receipts Fund.

Rituals and feasts

The basic principle of metamorphism that is expressed in the many motifs involving flora, fauna, graphic and the human world, is likewise expressed in ritual acts. The people of Bronze Age Thera lived and acted their religion within the collective unit. Particularly the enactment of processions or other types of ritual feasts at regular time intervals revived the principle of transformation and continuity. As Assmann (1992; 2000) has argued, the yearly procession/feast which interrupts everyday life emphasises the fundamental principle of the community and makes this principle visible. The importance of ritual acts is further stressed when the latter are illustrated on frescoes, as for example on the miniature friezes of the West House and particularly the procession of ships. This may be depicting an annual event which was performed in the same manner every year.

Conclusion

An attempt has been made to show how transformation seems to be an important principle in the world that is represented in the Theran frescoes. The repetitive circle of time, the spirals, the metamorphic plants, animals and especially the moving monkeys and mythological figures are expressions of this same underlying principle. Individual human life and social

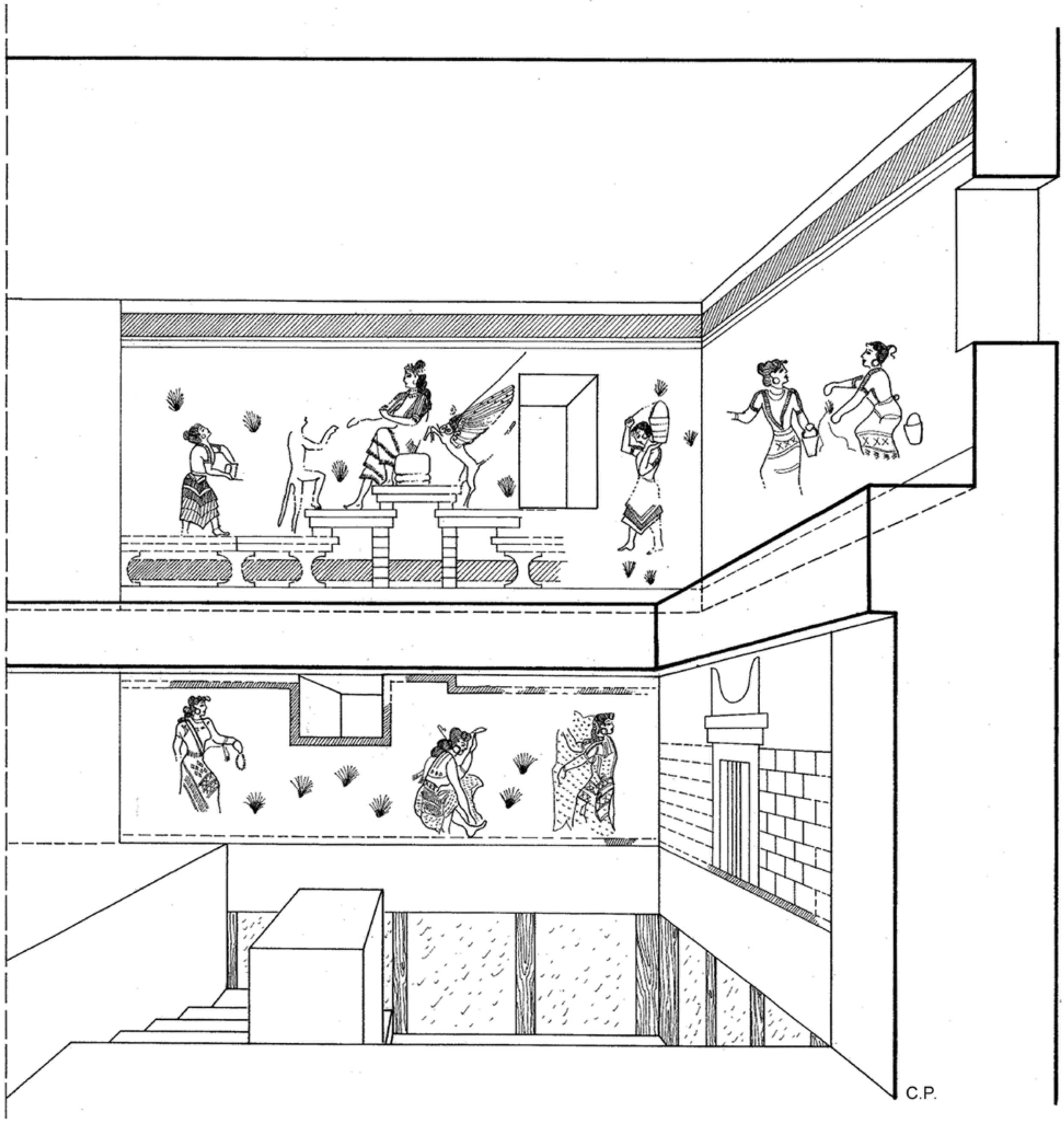

Figure 5. Reconstruction of paintings from Xeste 3, ground and first floor. Courtesy of Clairy Palyvou.

life are determined by transformations and renewals, a process which is confirmed and evoked through religious feasts and rituals. The most impressive representation of this metamorphic principle may be seen in three levels in Xeste 3, which may be dubbed as concrete, religious and abstract (Figure 5). The concrete level corresponds to the ground floor, where the fresco shows the metamorphoses through female rites of initiation in three steps; the religious level on the first floor where the representation of the goddess is characterized by a striking wealth of metamorphic symbols. The goddess is surrounded by a monkey and a griffin, her clothes and cheek are decorated with crocuses and around her neck she is wearing necklaces with dragonflies and ducks: birds which master the elements of water, land and air. The spirals on the second floor constitute the third level, as they may be taken to narrate the same principle through an abstract vocabulary. The fresco motifs discussed here illustrate an interest in the eternal continuity of transformations which may be accepted as a fundamental conceptual element in Theran religious thinking.

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Approaches to popular religion in Late Bronze Age Greece

Helène Whittaker

Introduction

This paper is concerned with the definition and identification of popular religion on the Greek mainland in the Mycenaean period. Although the attention given to popular religion has been useful because it both highlights that there was probably a good deal of variation in Mycenaean religion and attempts to counter the elite bias that inevitably characterises our understanding of prehistoric Greek religion, I propose that distinguishing between public and private cult may be a more profitable way of analysing the evidence for religious expression in the Mycenaean period. I also suggest that religion played an important integrative role in Mycenaean society.

The term 'popular religion' is somewhat general and open to different meanings. As it stands, it could be taken as referring to the religion as practised by the general population, that is the common religion in a certain place or time. But usually we mean something more specific than that. When we talk about popular religion, we tend to think of the beliefs and rituals held by people who do not possess political and social power, so that basically the term is regarded as being more or less synonymous with non-official religion. This is the way in which it has generally been used in Aegean archaeology.

According to this definition then, the beliefs and practices of popular religion will in some way be separate and different from, existing alongside or even in opposition to the religious beliefs and practices of ruling elites and upper classes. Moreover, popular religion is very often thought of as being inherently conservative, preserving archaic beliefs and practices that were never part of or had been discarded by official cult, and at the same time also as less organised, more open to expressions of personal beliefs and immediate concerns, and subject to a good deal of local or regional variation. The activities that were, and in some cases still are, associated with holy wells in Great Britain and Ireland constitute a good example of what we might consider a popular cult practice which is variously tolerated but not sanctioned by official religion (Rattue 1995; Simpson and Roud 2003, *s.v.* 'wells'; Connolly 2007, *s.v.* 'holy wells'). The spiritual importance of water sources has through time become intertwined with Christian beliefs by being associated with saints and miracles, but is believed, quite possibly erroneously, to go back to a prehistoric pagan past.

Finding ways of dealing with the complexities of the symbolic world of past peoples lies at the heart of archaeological interpretation. However, we could, with reason, ask whether it is really possible to recognise evidence for popular religion on the Greek mainland in the Late Bronze Age and to what extent it is even correct to try to distinguish between official and popular forms of beliefs and rituals in this period. In a paper given at a conference at the Swedish Institute in Athens in 1980, entitled 'Official and Popular Cults in Mycenaean Greece', Robin Hägg (1981) argued that Mycenaean religion comprised at least two separate levels. This was an important contribution to the discussion of Aegean Bronze Age religion, not only because it emphasised what was rapidly becoming the orthodox opinion, that the religious beliefs and practices of the inhabitants of the Greek mainland must have been different from those of the Cretans, but also because it provided a framework for understanding the significance of Minoan influences on Mycenaean religion and countered a monolithic view of the social and symbolic world of the inhabitants of the Greek mainland in the prehistoric period by trying to bring those who did not belong to the elites and were poorly represented in the archaeological record into the discussion.

What Hägg calls official or upper level religion represents the beliefs and rituals of the elites, which had been affected or transformed through contact with the palatial cultures of Minoan Crete at the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. What he calls popular religion represents the beliefs and rituals of ordinary people, which he suggests remained basically unchanged from the Middle to the Late Helladic period. He further suggests that these may not have differed very much from those of the Classical period, perhaps retaining features that had been inherited from the pre-Greek population of the Greek mainland. The implication is that Mycenaean popular religion was characterised by timelessness and by resistance to outside influences. In contrast to the beliefs and rituals of the ruling elites and their hangers-on, it is native and authentically Helladic, a view underscored by his suggestion that natural and abiding features of the landscape, such as caves, high places, and open-air locations near sources of water, were associated with ritual meaning for ordinary Mycenaeans.

Although Hägg was concerned with defining the separate characteristics of official and popular religion, he also made it clear that he saw them as the two end-points on a sliding scale of religious beliefs and practices. He emphasised that Mycenaean religion at any level was not an unchanging entity and that the distinction between official and popular was likely to have disappeared by the end of the Bronze Age. That there was a dichotomy between official and popular religion has been generally accepted in Mycenaean archaeology since the publication of Hägg's article in 1981. James Wright (1994, 51-54) has taken the line of thought a step further by arguing that the early Mycenaean elites appropriated Minoan religious symbols as a means of setting themselves above the Helladic beliefs and rituals adhered to by the general population. In his view, the distinction between official and popular was not something that had evolved through time as a more or less natural consequence of the Mycenaean elites' increasing exposure to Minoan palatial culture, but had been deliberately fostered by those in power in order to strengthen their legitimacy as rightful rulers. Because obvious elements of Minoan religion are materialised in elite artefacts that seem often to have been used in contexts in which the display of power would have been important, this can be seen as a plausible interpretation of early Mycenaean interest in Minoan religion (cf. Whittaker 2002). A historical parallel for the adoption of foreign rituals as an exclusive court religion by a ruling elite can be seen in the introduction of Hinduism to Java (Christie 1964). It is noteworthy that the Javanese rulers were not equally interested in all aspects of Hinduism but only in those that could serve to enhance their power. This seems also to have been the case with regard to the Mycenaean elites' interest in Minoan religious expression.

Identifying Popular Cult in the Archaeological Evidence

Although Hägg believed that the rituals that were associated with popular religion were relatively simple, requiring little in the way of specialised cult equipment and mostly taking place in non-architectural settings, he argued that it should be possible to recognise evidence for popular religion in the archaeological record. He proposed that the small terracotta female figurines of various types widely found in a variety of contexts in the latter part of the Mycenaean period should be regarded as ritual objects that expressed the beliefs of ordinary Mycenaeans. Their occurrence in significant contexts could in that case be regarded as good evidence for cult places associated with popular religion. I will first discuss in some detail the possible examples of Mycenaean cult places associated with popular religion identified by Hägg and then more generally investigate the usefulness of the distinction between popular and official religion for our understanding of Mycenaean cult places.

Almost two hundred whole and fragmentary Phi and Psi figurines were found at the site of the later sanctuary to Athena in the Marmaria area at Delphi (Hägg 1981: 38; Demangel 1926: 5-36). Many of them were found lying on a flat stone where they seem to have been purposely deposited. Because some of the figurines had been pierced in the upper part of the body so that a string or a band of some kind could be threaded through them, Hägg suggested that they could have been hung from the branches of trees in a sacred grove, which can be presumed to have existed in or near the location in which they were found. Those that did not have holes could instead have been tied with a loop around the neck. Although perhaps somewhat imaginative, this is a suggestion that chimes well with later Greek cult practice as well as more generally with the abundant cross-cultural evidence for the religious significance of trees (Price 1999: 54-55). However, because the deposit has been shown to date to the late Geometric or early Archaic period, there is no knowing what the original context(s) of the figurines may have been and their value as evidence for the existence of a Mycenaean cult place in the area is therefore fairly weak (Lerat 1957). Figurines are also found in tombs and Sylvie Müller has argued that the deposit found in the Marmaria area at Delphi is more likely to have come from graves that had been plundered in the post-Mycenaean period than to represent the vestiges of a Mycenaean cult place (Müller 1992: 481-485).

Maria Krogulska's discussion of the development of Archaic Boeotian terracotta figurines from Mycenaean figurines provides another perspective (Krogulska 1967; cf. Hägg 1981: 38, n. 28). On the Boeotian figurines, clothing and jewellery are rendered in paint and many of them were provided with necklaces with a central pendant, presumably reflecting a fashion for large 'statement pieces' among the women of Boeotia at this time. The necklace on one of the figurines illustrated by Krogulska can be clearly identified as a Mycenaean phi figurine that had been attached to a flat band which would have been tied at the back of the neck (Krogulska 1967: figs. 28, 31; Szabó 1994: 67). The custom of using Mycenaean phi figurines as pendants can be seen on several other Boeotian figurines (Szabó 1994: fig. 64, 66, 70). It is not really clear from the painted decoration on the Boeotian figurines exactly how the Mycenaean figurines were attached to the neck-band but some of the depictions do suggest that in order to work as pendants they had been pierced in the upper part of the body. The Mycenaean figurines found in the Marmaria area at Delphi can therefore be regarded as material correlates of the painted jewellery on Archaic Boeotian figurines. Consequently, rather than representing a unitary Mycenaean ritual context, they are more likely to have been dedications of jewellery made by women to Athena in the late Geometric/early Archaic period, perhaps at the time when the sanctuary to the goddess was established at the site. Small terracotta figurines survive the centuries well and the representations on the Boeotian figurines suggest that it may not have been uncommon to turn them into jewellery in the Geometric and Archaic periods. The figurines found at Delphi had been pierced after firing and it would seem most likely that this was done at the time when it became fashionable to wear them as pendants rather than in the Mycenaean period. Mycenaean figurines that were used as ornaments in later periods may have come from burials that had been plundered or opened by chance but it is also possible that they were family heirlooms, the possession and display of which were associated with ancestry and inherited status.

The concentrated presence of fragments from more than a hundred figurines on a ridge near Klenies in the Argolid could indicate that this location should be identified as an open-air sanctuary (Hägg 1981: 38-39). No traces of any built structures were identified. The figurines were mostly female of the Phi and Psi types, but there were also a small number of animal figurines. The ritual nature of the site could be said to be supported by the meagre pottery remains, which consist of fragments of a few drinking cups and a hydria and the foot of an animal rhyton. The site was excavated in 1912 and it is possible that not all the pottery was kept or that some of the material may have been lost in storage. Because the site is situated near an ancient route that connected the Corinthia with the Argolid, the excavator, August Frickenhaus, suggested that the figurines were offerings that had been left by travellers, an interpretation that was accepted by Hägg. This seems plausible enough but the contention that the site should be classified as a popular cult place in the sense that it reflects the concerns of people who were excluded from the official cult practices of the palaces is perhaps less convincing. Mycenaean travellers are perhaps more likely to have been officials and envoys from the palaces and other administrative centres than ordinary farmers and villagers.

Hägg's interpretation of Klenies as a popular cult site was accepted by Klaus Kilian, who was also able to republish the finds, which had been thought lost, after he had happened to come across them in the storeroom at Tiryns (Kilian 1990: 185-190). Kilian (1990, 190) further identified a cave near Tiryns, known as the Profitis Elias Cave, as the location for ritual activities of a popular nature. The cave was located just below the summit of an outcrop of the Profitis Elias mountain. A large building surrounded by a paved court was situated on the summit of the outcrop and a storage area had been cut into the rock to its south, indicating that the cave would seem to have been part of a larger complex. Fragments of drinking cups and cooking vessels were found on the floor of the cave, indicating that it had been used for cooking and eating in the Mycenaean period. No objects of obvious ritual significance were found either in the cave or in the building and court above it. Kilian's arguments for the ritual nature of the cave is based mainly on the fact that the pottery found in the cave consists of a selection of the types found in the nearby settlement and that it was used for ritual activities in the Archaic period, both of which seem to me to constitute a rather weak foundation for the identification of a Mycenaean sanctuary.

Other cult places that have been identified in open air locations are not readily identified as either popular or official in an absolute sense. The open-air sanctuary near the summit of Mount Kynortion goes back to the beginning of the Late Bronze Age. Finds include bronze weapons and Minoan seals (Lambrinoudakis 1981). The richness and quality of the finds clearly indicate that at least some of those who frequented the sanctuary belonged to the upper social levels. The same can be said about the evidence for Mycenaean cult activities at the ash altar to Zeus on Mount Lykaion in Arcadia, which is currently being excavated (Romano and Voyatzis 2014). Finds include a large number of kylikes, human and animal figurines, and a Minoan seal made of rock crystal with an image of a bull. The seal, which has been dated to Late Minoan II, can probably be considered evidence for elite involvement in the sanctuary.

Cult buildings from the Late Bronze Age have been identified at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Methana. Their small size suggests exclusivity and some of the finds reflect elite involvement (Whittaker 1997). At Mycenae, the area of Cult Centre was reached from the palace by the Processional Way, which strongly suggests that it was associated with official palatial cult. However, originally the Cult Centre lay outside the citadel wall and would also have been easily accessible to people who lived in the town (French 2002: 85). At Tiryns, the sanctuaries in the Unterburg date to after the destruction of the palace (Kilian 1981). They may have functioned as town sanctuaries or have been directly associated with the activities of the new rulers who established themselves in the ruins of the palace. The sanctuary at Methana is similar to those found at Mycenae and Tiryns but was not associated with a palace (Konsolaki 2002). If Cosmopoulos is correct in identifying Megaron B at Eleusis as a cult building, its monumentality suggests that the cult activities were of an official nature, but it is also the case that a number of people could have gathered in the area below the platform (Cosmopoulos 2014). In the case of both open-air sanctuaries and cult buildings, the distinction between popular and official cult would seem difficult to validate archaeologically.

Questioning Popular Cult

The archaeological evidence that can be associated with popular religion is, on the whole, rather uninformative and to some degree contentious as cult places and cult buildings are not easily categorised as either official or popular. Hägg's suggestion that the beliefs and rituals of popular religion in the Mycenaean period may not have been all that different from what we find in the pre-Mycenaean and later historical periods might seem plausible but without any archaeological evidence to which they can be attached does not take us very far. Moreover, historical investigations of religion in other societies, for example Ronald Hutton's work on the religions of the British Isles from the earliest times to the present, tend to suggest that the idea of the timeless unchanging beliefs of the peasantry is a myth (Hutton 1999: 112-131). This is not, of course, to say that some beliefs and their material manifestations could not survive for a very long time, but this is something that needs to be demonstrated in each case and not taken as a given. There is no real reason to assume that the beliefs and rituals of ordinary Mycenaeans were less susceptible to change that those of the ruling elites.

Mycenaean society at the sub-elite level consisted mostly of farmers and herders, whose worldly and spiritual concerns would have derived from the land on which their livelihood depended. Their way of life may have followed a similar pattern for centuries. It is, however, just as likely that the establishment of the palatial system of rule had a major impact on social organisation and individual lives at all levels of society. Mycenaean society was probably also characterised by a certain degree of ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. The inhabitants of many Mycenaean settlements are likely to have included traders and craftsmen, some of whom may have come from outside the Greek mainland. Permanent or temporary incomers will have brought their religious beliefs and practices with them, which may in some cases have had some appeal beyond the immediate group and become more generally part of Mycenaean religion. One possible example is suggested by a fragment of a Linear B tablet from Pylos (Fr 1206), which records the existence of a goddess known as the Asian Potnia (Po-ti-ni-ja A-si-wi-ja). Because she is mentioned in a Linear B tablet in connection with the offering of a substantial quantity of perfumed oil, her worship must have been part of official palatial cult. Groups of women who are identified as coming from the eastern Aegean are mentioned in a number of Linear B tablets from Pylos and Sarah Morris has suggested that her cult may have been introduced to the Greek mainland by them (Morris 2001; see also Michailidou and Voutsa 2005). Since these women are likely to have been slaves working in the palatial textile industry, this would be a remarkable instance of a foreign non-elite cult influencing official cult practice.

Historical and cross-cultural evidence shows that religion can function as a unifying factor across social divides. Those in power may therefore choose to invest heavily in ritual activities at all levels of society in order to promote social cohesion. Although ruling elites will often wish to present themselves essentially and qualitatively as somehow separate from and superior to the general population, they also need to interact with their subjects in ways which maintain and strengthen their authority. There is a clear link between visibility and the exercise of effective and legitimate power. Public ceremonies, in particular those that are of a religious or semi-religious nature, are eminently suitable to encompass both these concerns. They provide wide exposure, but as this takes place according to set rules within the confines of an established context, they also allow rulers and members of elites to present themselves, through personal display, in ways which set them apart from onlookers and other participants (Whittaker 2012).

In the Mycenaean period, there is much evidence to indicate that political and social power was upheld and legitimised by religious beliefs and rituals. Many of the themes of palatial iconography seem to depict various religious rituals (Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1996). Particular mention can be made of the frescoes which show processions of women carrying votives (Kontorli-Papadopoulou 1996: 134-137; Immerwahr 1990: 114-117). We know from the Linear B tablets that, in the kingdom of Pylos at least, cult places that were associated with palatial cult, such as the important sanctuary at Pa-ki-ja-na, were in places that were situated quite far from the palace (Hiller 1981; Palaima 2008: 350-352). Tablet Un 2 speaks of a ceremony taking place at Pakijana on the occasion of the initiation of the wanax. This could well have been an esoteric ritual, attendance at which may have been restricted to a small number of participants. However, it is not difficult to imagine that religious ceremonies at Pa-ki-ja-na and other important sanctuaries would have incorporated formal processions from the palace to the sanctuary as part of the ritual. The terracotta statues that have been found in Mycenaean sanctuaries vary in size but are all small and light enough to be easily portable, and this may have been significant, indicating that they were regularly carried in processions on ritual occasions (Whittaker 2009: 106-108). In general, religious processions could have played an important unifying role in regularly linking the different parts of the kingdom to the political centre. They may have lasted for days, perhaps even weeks and would also have allowed for the demarcation between participants and observers to become to a certain extent fluid, thereby eroding any distinction between official and popular religion. When a procession passed by, many people could have gathered to watch and also to attach themselves to it as it made its way through the landscape. The ritual activities of official palatial religion would have served then to bring different social classes together, thereby strengthening the sense of community and promoting social cohesion, while at the same time maintaining and also reinforcing the social and political hierarchy.

To sum up so far, I am quite sceptical of the distinction between official and popular cult in the Mycenaean period, at least as defined along class lines with the elites adhering to one set of rituals and the general population to another. If we are to distinguish between official and popular religion in the Mycenaean period, I would prefer to do so in terms of types of ritual activities and the contexts in which they took place, that is with major public events at one end of the scale and those of a more informal nature, perhaps involving only family members, that took place within the household or at the graveside at the other. The rituals that took place at the popular level need not have differed in any essential way from those that took place at the palatial level or represented beliefs that were fundamentally different. From this perspective, the term popular religion can be regarded as more or less synonymous with household cult and evidence should primarily be sought in domestic and funerary contexts.

The House and Grave

Cross-cultural evidence indicates that the house can be imbued with symbolic meaning related to the religious world view of its inhabitants. The form of the house and the ordering of space within it will reflect and to some extent also define the relations between those who live there as well as the role of the household as an economic institution, which in turn may intertwined with religious beliefs. The ritual significance of the house may manifest itself in a standard plan and/or a fixed orientation of the entrance (Rapoport 1969: 49-55; Olivier 1987: 153-170; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994). Mycenaean domestic architecture is based on a simple plan, which allows, however, for considerable variation and extension. The typical Mycenaean house can be characterised as a long house with two or three rooms lying sequentially one after the other. The position of the entrance and other doorways can vary, and most houses are not strictly symmetrical in plan. There is no consistent orientation of the entrance. All in all, there is little reason to suggest that the form of the ordinary Mycenaean house was in itself considered sacred.

There is, however, some evidence to suggest that symbolic meaning may have been associated with particular elements of the house. Many cultures consider a particular place to be the centre of the earth or to be particularly sacred and this place can be symbolically replicated in private dwellings by the hearth (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994: 14-18). The fire that was used for cooking may also have been used for offerings to the supernatural powers. That the hearth was associated with symbolic meaning in Mycenaean Greece has been suggested by Kilian, who had observed that at Tiryns there was a pattern of terracotta figurines being found near the hearth (Kilian 1988: 148, fig. 16). A deposit of three vases, found nested together with a fragment of a figurine near the hearth of the main room of Unit IV-4 at Nichoria, constitutes further evidence for the ritual meaning of the hearth (Aschenbrenner *et al.* 1992: 435-438). The fact that hearths in Mycenaean houses are often centrally placed may have been for symbolic as well as practical reasons, as is generally accepted with regard to the monumental hearths that were an integral feature of the palatial megara.

Iphiyenia Tournavitou (1999: 833) has pointed out that surprisingly few hearths from domestic contexts have been preserved. In some cases the presence of fragments of chimney pots in the remains of buildings where hearths have not been found indicates that they must have existed, and she suggests that the rarity of excavated hearths may have something to do with the way they had been constructed, the occupational history of the site, or erosion. Their archaeological rarity is therefore not necessarily an argument against their symbolic significance. The situation in the Bronze Age could have been similar to that in the later Greek period, when the undoubted symbolism of the hearth in domestic cult as reflected in the literary sources is not upheld by the archaeological evidence (Jameson 1990: 98-99).

Figurines were also found associated with doorways. The significance of the entrance into the house is also evident from the fact that thresholds were sometimes carefully paved with stone, made of wood, or a single large stone block (Whittaker 1997: 134). As the boundary between the safety of the home and the dangers of the external world, the entrance into the house can be seen to have been in particular need of divine protection against malignant spirits seeking to come into the house and harm its inhabitants and is often regarded as a liminal zone where the natural and the supernatural spheres intersect (Parker Pearson and Richards 1994: 24-29; Hodder 1992: 129-130, 137). The imagery of two lions standing on altars above the main entrance into the citadel at Mycenae provides further evidence for the symbolic significance of entrances in the Mycenaean period. With regard to both hearths and entrances, it would seem that we can see the same beliefs materialised in both the official context of the palace and the popular domestic sphere. This suggests that there was an interdependence between official and popular levels of cult, in which the influence may not always have been from the top down. The importance of the hearth in Mycenaean palatial cult may be in part a reflection of its long-lived ritual significance at all levels of society, going back at least to the Early Helladic period (Caskey 1990).

Burials are by their very nature ritual occasions and as such can provide evidence for religious beliefs, which may be intertwined with other aspects of burial such as the expression of ethnic or cultural identity, rank, and social persona. Funerary ritual has a number of functions in relation to both the living and the dead. It has become almost a commonplace in funerary archaeology to say that the dead do not bury themselves and that the purpose of funerary ritual is to provide an outlet for the feelings of grief and loss felt by family and friends. This is a very one-sided view. Rituals performed in the period between death and the closing of the grave also function to mark the transition of the deceased from life to death and to give them a proper send-off to the other side. The place of the dead in the afterworld may also be dependent on the performance of certain rituals. The act of burial itself can be regarded as ritual action in that the laying of the body in its final resting place can be seen as an offering to the earth. The form of the grave, the positioning of the body, and the absence or presence of grave goods, can all reflect religious beliefs. Kazimierz Lewartowski's study of simple graves in the Mycenaean period has shown that pottery, in particular vessels used for eating and drinking, is the most common type of grave goods (Lewartowski 2000). In some few cases, they can be shown to have contained food items and it is possible that the vessels that did not contain anything had been emptied as part of the funerary ritual. Broken or incomplete vessels also occur. The presence of miniature vessels is also noteworthy. Broken, empty, or emptied vessels as well as miniatures could reflect a belief that objects that were needed by the dead in the afterlife had to be non-functional or, if they were originally functional objects, made useless for the world of the living (cf. Whittaker 2014: 133). Figurines are also common in burials, perhaps indicating a ritual connection between the domestic and funerary spheres (Cavanagh and Mee 1998: 113). The association of figurines with hearths and entrances suggests that they could have had a protective function and a similar interpretation is plausible also for their occurrence as grave goods.

To conclude, however one may wish to define and investigate popular religion, the evidence from the Mycenaean period can only be regarded as fairly meagre. This may be because the materialisation of religious beliefs was important at the official elite level where religious rituals and ceremonies also presented the occasion for the display of power and status. At the non-elite level, the social and political aspects of religious ritual would have been less important, which could have meant that the elaboration of ritual paraphernalia was also of lesser importance. The apparent lack of materialisation of religious beliefs and activities in popular religion could, however, also be a consequence of the fact that archaeology favours the rich and powerful, who generally have nicer and better things that are made of more durable materials. The paucity of evidence for the religious beliefs and practices of ordinary Mycenaeans need not therefore signify that popular religion did not make use of the types of specialised cult equipment that we find in elite contexts but rather that items of religious significance have not survived because of the relative impermanence of the materials of which they were made.

Robin Hägg In Memoriam

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The Mycenaean figurines revisited

Nagia Polychronakou Sgouritsa

Anthropomorphic figurines, mostly made of stone, have been created since the Palaeolithic era (Cohen 2003; Delporte 1993). Their presence became stronger during Neolithic times (Orphanidi 1998; for a comprehensive presentation of views about their function and meaning in the Aegean, Stergiopoulos 2004: 10-12; Orphanidi 2009: 513-525; see also Cavanagh and Mee 1998: 113). They continued on into the Bronze Age, when they were differentiated in quantity, material used and aesthetic expression all over the Aegean. Their production has led to numerous hypotheses, as they were analyzed from many different perspectives, according to several norms, symbolic references and interpretive models, with diverse theoretical and methodological frameworks. The most usual hypothesis that covers almost all the prehistoric periods sustains that figurines, both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, were items for ceremonial rituals (for a talismanic purpose of the Early Helladic animal figurines, beside the ceremonial one, Phelps 1987: 238-239). The context of some of these finds supports, more or less, this view (for the Minoan figurines, Rethemiotakis 2001: 105-151). Initially, this assumption was adopted for the Mycenaean figurines as well, at least until the publication of French's seminal work. The present paper aims at presenting and examining recent evidence that may support new theories and confirm earlier views.

After the Early Helladic period, during which the types, for the most part animals (see Pullen 1992: 45-54; the Cycladic marble figurines are not considered in this context), and the number of figurines were limited, and the MH gap, the manufacture of clay figurines accelerated in the Late Bronze Age. The first Late Helladic figurines appeared at the end of the 15th century BC, in the LHIIB/LHIIIA1 period (French 1971: 103-104, 106, 174; Weber-Hiden 2009: 24; for recent early examples, from the MH/LH-LHII tholos 3 at Magoula of Galatas, Troezenia, reminiscent of the EM-MM tombs of Mesara, see Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2003a: 179-180, 228 figs 75a-c; 2016a: 162), under Minoan influence and style (French 1971: 105-106; Rethemiotakis 2001: 57-58). From the very beginning they provoked an intense scholarly interest, disproportionately high considering their unattractive appearance compared to the sensational finds at Mycenae and elsewhere.

Schliemann was the first to be interested in these objects and a decade later Tsountas, who discussed them in the presentation of the finds from the chamber tombs he excavated at Mycenae (French 1971: 102; Tzonou-Herbst 2003: 647; Schallin and Pakanen 2009: 9). In the 20th century their study, gaining in popularity among scholars, was intensified. 1971 was a year of high importance for their research, with a comprehensive version of the doctoral thesis of Elisabeth French published in volume 69 of the Annual of the British School at Athens. French's article, which included the bulk of the material known until then, became a work of reference, opened new paths in the methodological approach, systematized the evidence, furthering our knowledge, as all the known types were meticulously categorized and the risks of their interpretation were emphasized (French 1981; 2009: 18-19). In the meantime, new material was added to the corpus, due to the publications of excavations that brought to light new data, extended the morphological subtypes and provided evidence of new contextual assemblages (e.g. Shelton 2009: 55-60). Even so, more than 40 years later, the various assumptions advanced at the time still wait to be confirmed.

Any contribution to a re-examination of the Mycenaean figurines should focus on issues that relate to differentiations of type and find place, as well as on new evidence. Therefore, some finds from Attica, Aegina and Keos are herein examined anew and discussed.

Attic graves have yielded a substantial number of figurines, among which some unusual pieces (French 1971: 177). Although Attica is the second area in Mycenaean Greece in terms of figurine production, a statistical evaluation is impossible, as the well-documented excavated tombs constitute only a small part of the numerous cemeteries, with the exception of those at Perati and the Athenian Agora. The material coming from these two sites is not enough for conclusions; only four female figurines were discovered in the cemetery of the Athenian Agora dated to the LHIIIA1, the LHIIIA2 and the LHIIIB2 period (Immewahr 1971: 109; see also French 1971: 114, 131, 135), whereas the examples from Perati, comparatively few, female, bovines, other animals, birds and a seat, belong mostly to the LHIIIC period, with scanty finds of the LHIIIB2 (Iakovidis 1969-1970: 265-272). There are, however, some unique or very rare Attic types that deserve attention. They include three intriguing three-figure composites and a seated kourotrophos, in addition to a few other figurines, of an exceptional type, without exact provenance, such as the female rider with upraised hands (of a Psi type version), seated side-saddle on horseback, in the Stathatos collection, from a tomb in Mesogaia, between Kharvati and Spata (Levi 1951: 108-125, pl. 4a-b; cf. Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellaraki 1997: 522-525), the model of a bed with a reclining child (unpublished, in the National Museum at Athens, NM 663, from the Vlastos Collection, French 1971: 172; Tamvaki 1973: 253) and a breadmaker (French 1971: 173), similar to the two examples from Tsoungiza (Wright et al. 1990: 636; another one comes from Eleusis: Kalliope Papangeli, personal communication).

The three Attic triple examples belong to two distinctly different types, although they also share a basic common element; two Phi figurines connected at the torso and the base. Apart from these finds, three more such groups are so far known, one from a chamber tomb at Mycenae, a fragmentary group from the sanctuary of Aphaia and one of unknown provenance in the Louvre (Pilafidis-Williams 2009: 118-120), undoubtedly a funerary offering, to judge by its state of preservation. Two of the finds from Attica were deposited in a double pit grave, in the cemetery at Glyka Nera, in the NW part of Mesogaia (Kakavoyiannis 2001: 64-66; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2001a: 141-144; 2001b: 62-63), probably the burial of a baby, whereas the third came from a chamber tomb (chamber tomb 6) at Alyki /Voula (French 1971: 144, 176; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa1986: 153 figs 1-2).

The three women, who might be under a common mantel/shawl or embraced, represent one of the two types, known only from Attica; from Aliki/Voula, in the western shore, and Glyka Nera, in Mesogaia. The basic characteristic of this category is the central figurine, placed a bit higher than the others, with only the head, the neck and, rendered to an extent, the arms. The other triple group comprises also a couple of united Phi figurines and a woman, of lesser dimensions and modeled in a naturalistic way, seated on their shoulders and with the hands on the top of their head. This type finds parallels in the pieces from Mycenae, the sanctuary of Aphaia and the Louvre. The two categories of triple figurines differ from each other. Consequently, a crucial question about their symbolism and function emerges, as their context does not support any interpretation. Two examples of both types were deposited in the same burial at Glyka Nera, together with three common Phi figurines and ordinary pottery (Kakavoyiannis 2001: 64-65, fig. 13, 66; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2001a: 146 fig. 3). The other Attic example, of better quality, from the cemetery at Alyki/Voula, was found discarded with a bird askos. Their meaning seems mysterious and only hypotheses may be tentatively advanced, drawn from the mythology of the historical era. It could be assumed that the three embraced women were analogous with the triads of deities and nymphs, some of them with a long tradition in Attica; they might correspond to the very ancient (παλαιγενείς) Fates, their sisters the Hours or the Graces who escorted (together with the Fates) Persephone to Hades (Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2001a: 147). It is tempting to suppose that the other group represents the transport of a deity during a festival, such as the practice known as Theophoria (Θεοφορία) in later times (Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2001a: 147; for te-o-po-ri-ja see Andrikou 2009: 33-36). Again, another question with no answer, concerning their limited number, arises. Did they have a personal meaning to the dedicators? Did they represent a belief, of very limited expansion, in Attica and the Argolid, expressed in this way?

An exceptional kourotrophos came to light also from a chamber tomb at Aliki/Voula, the largest and wealthiest of the cemetery (chamber tomb A). The woman and the baby were rendered in a more or less naturalistic style; the kourotrophos was seated on a high, elaborate, of a solid type (A) throne, of an extraordinary kind (French 1971: 169, 170; Vlassopoulou-Karydi 2008: 22, 26, 32, 45, 63, 65, 82-83), decorated on its exterior surface with a flame pattern (or adder mark, displaying an unknown symbolism), placed in panels and surrounded by dots, with her feet modeled separately and resting on a footstool (cf. Vlassopoulou-Karydi 2008: 84 no 22, from Ialyssos). Another throne, with the seated figurine lost, was found in this cemetery (shaft grave I); it belonged to the usual solid type (A) and was decorated with the same flame motif and a palm tree (French 1971: 115-116; cf. Tamvaki 1973: 256). Unfortunately, the chamber of tomb A was prepared for a new burial and all the offerings were randomly discarded. Although the exact original position of this object in the chamber is unknown, it was found between two Phi figurines, according to an excavation photograph. This kourotrophos, dated to the early LHIIIA2 period because of her naturalistic characteristics, such as the plastic eyes, the painted nipples and the separated legs, remains almost incomparable in Mycenaean Greece, with a fair enough parallel of unknown provenance in the Louvre (Vlassopoulou-Karydi 2008: 81-82 no 19; Pilafidis-Williams 2009: 120-121 fig. 12; French 1971: 169, 171). It is worth noting that from the same cemetery came another seated kourotrophos, of the usual type (French 1971: 170; see also Pilafidis-Williams 1998: 73 n. 169), similar to those from other sites in Attica, such as two recent finds from the nearby Alimos (D. Kaza-Papageorgiou, personal communication) and elsewhere.

Aegina, despite its limited extent, is the third area, after the Argolid and Attica, in terms of the number of Mycenaean figurines, because of the substantial quantity from the sanctuary of Aphaia (Weber-Hiden 2009: 34). Figurines of various types, dated from the LHIIIA1 until the LHIIIC early period, were discovered mainly in three sites on the island: the cemetery at the Myloi ('Windmill') hill, west of Kolona, the settlement and the cemetery at Lazarides in the eastern mountainous part, and the area in the later sanctuary of Aphaia, to the east and mainland as well. Examination of these items yields a considerable range of morphological traits, especially from the finds of the sanctuary. In contrast to this material, published and repeatedly discussed (Pilafidis-Williams 1998: 5-77), the objects from the cemetery at the 'Windmill hill' were only briefly reported (Keramopoullos 1910: 191 (48-50), 198 (29-31); French 1971: 120, 137, 143-144, 147, 171), whereas the figurines found at Lazarides were almost completely unknown (Efstratiou and Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2016: 47-51; Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2009: 625-626, 628). Some characteristics of the figurines from Lazarides, coming from only two tombs[1] and the settlement are worth noting: five Psi figurines, deposited in the same tomb, are provided with paddle-shaped arms, decorated differently from the torso, with horizontal lines in a vertical row suggesting sleeves (cf. Weber-Hiden 2009: 31) (Figures 1-2). This way of rendering the arms is not common; it appears in the NE Peloponnese (Weiberg 2009: 72), in the sanctuary of Aphaia, with one very fragmentary example, dated to the LHIIIA2 period, included in the group of the early Psi figurines (Pilafidis-Williams 2009: 114 figs 1, 9) and in the chamber tomb A of the cemetery at the 'Windmill hill' (Keramopoullos 1910: 191 fig. 4). Did this rendering follow specific trends and preference of the commissioners? Moreover, the five Psi figurines from the cemetery at Lazarides, as well as one Phi, wear an unusual polos (Figures 1-2), of a kind found also in a specimen from the 'Windmill hill' cemetery (French 1971: 147), but not in the material from the neighbouring settlement, the sanctuary of Aphaia and some other sites of the island, such as Kylindras and Perdika, unpublished but on display in the Museum of Kolona. These poloi, with open spaces in their lower part, could possibly be interpreted as crowns. Parallels exist in a few sites of NE Peloponnese, such as Korakou, Mycenae (French 1971: 143, 147, 176) and Methana (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2003b: 281 fig. 10 a-b; 2016a: 165-166). Parallels exist in Attica too, in the cemetery at Glyka Nera (Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2001b: 63), where the female figurine seated on the shoulders of the two Phi figurines has such a polos. Besides, one kourotrophos out of the three from the same tomb at Lazarides (Figure 3) wears a similar polos (cf. French 1971: 143). Is this kind of polos a symbol of a high social rank and does it reflect a social distinction? Still, why is this way of assigning a high status so limited and found, to the present, only in figurines deposited in burials of those areas?

It is beyond any doubt that the figurines from the settlement and the cemetery at Lazarides as well as those from the sanctuary of Aphaia, two sites in close proximity but with different character and use, demonstrate, as might be expected, differences in traits. Yet they also share resemblances in the rendering of the kourotrophoi (for a comprehensive presentation, Pilafidis-Williams 2009: 113-124; for rare types of Aeginetan figurines, Weiberg 2009: 67), all of good quality and definitely not mass produced. Consequently, another critical question concerning their production arises. Were they produced on the island, with local clay, by specialized craftsmen, as some of these objects were probably created by the same hand, or were they imported from the neighbouring centres of Attica and the Argolid (Weiberg 2009: 63-64, 71-73, esp. 72; see also Shelton 2009: 58-60; 2016: 324), as was the pottery? Besides, two figurines from the cemetery at Lazarides, a driven ox and a fragmentary chariot complex, have exact parallels in the material from Ayios Konstantinos on Methana (Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2003c: 392 fig. 14, 395-396, figs 20-22), four miles away. It is of note that the figurines from the settlement at Lazarides were found in various places: they were deposited in child burials inside the houses, were discovered on the floor of rooms, with other ordinary items, such as pottery of diverse types and quality, spindle whorls, metal artefacts, whereas one Psi figurine was placed among the stones of the threshold of an interior room, an act that may have had a particular symbolic meaning (Kilian 1988: 142; Tzonou-Herbst 2009: 168-169).The examination of these groups of finds from the cemetery and the settlement indicate that they were manufactured by distinctly different people, whilst those from the settlement were of inferior quality (Figure 4), although some of them were also grave offerings. Thus, the question that arises concerns the difference between the carefully manufactured and decorated figurines found in the impressive built chamber tombs of the cemetery and the mediocre examples discovered in the intramural infant burials, mostly without other offerings, and those that came to light on the floor of a few rooms, of unknown purpose. Does this difference relate to rituals and public ceremonial practices organized in the cemeteries, a clear tendency of pomposity favoured by the family (see also Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2016a: 166; 2016b: 56)?

The assumptions about the function of the figurines are difficult or, almost, impossible to verify, as figurines of all kinds, of the miniature type included, were found in many and various places. They were brought to light in tombs, houses, in settlements and palace complexes, in places organized as storerooms and workshops (e.g. Demakopoulou 2014: 148, 153 figs. 20-22. According to D. Kaza-Papageorgiou (personal communication), figures and figurines found in complex III at Kontopigado, 5km south of the Acropolis in Athens, were connected with rituals that took place in this workshop), as well as in

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[1] Built chamber tomb A contained 16 figurines, Phi and Psi, kourotrophoi and a fragmentary chariot complex, whereas tomb B a driven ox.

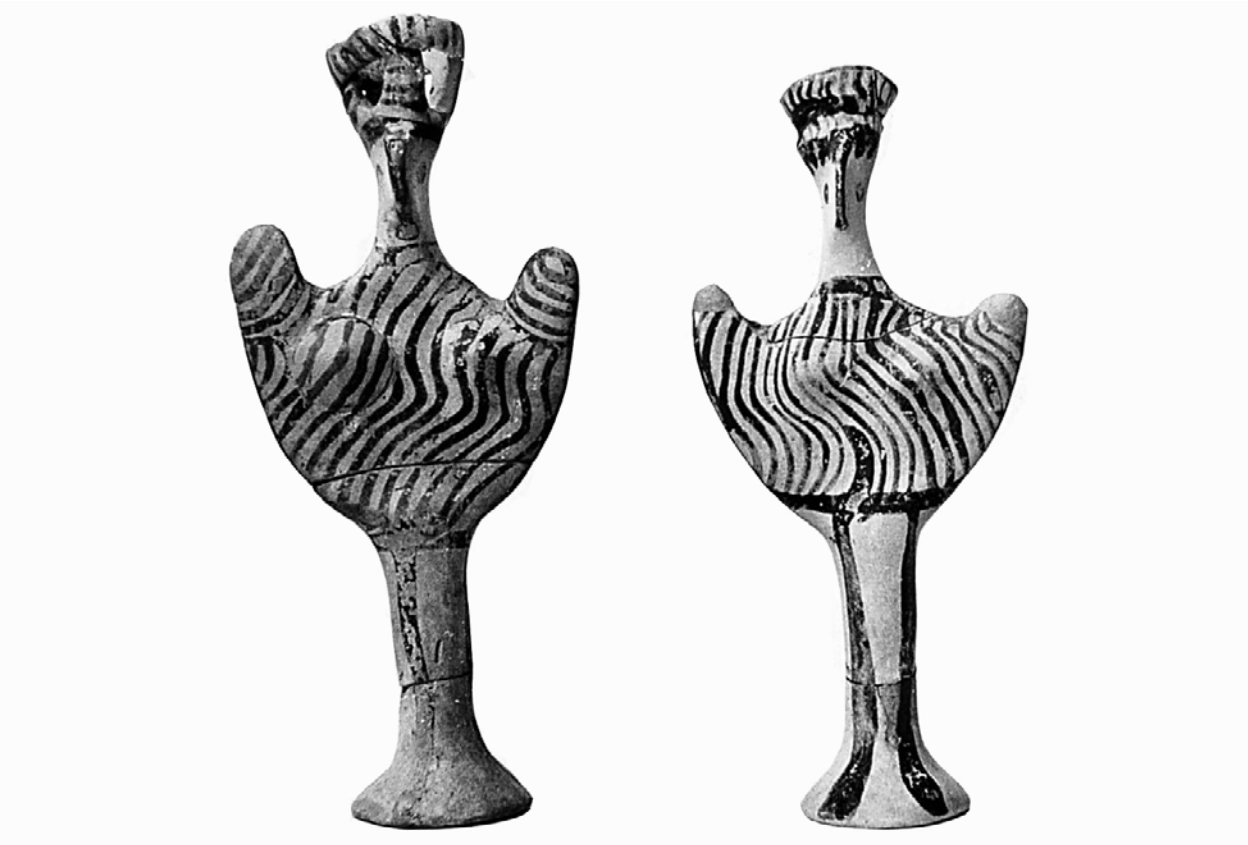

Figure 1. Psi figurines from tomb A, Lazarides, Aegina, front. H. 0.135m (left) and 0.126m (right).

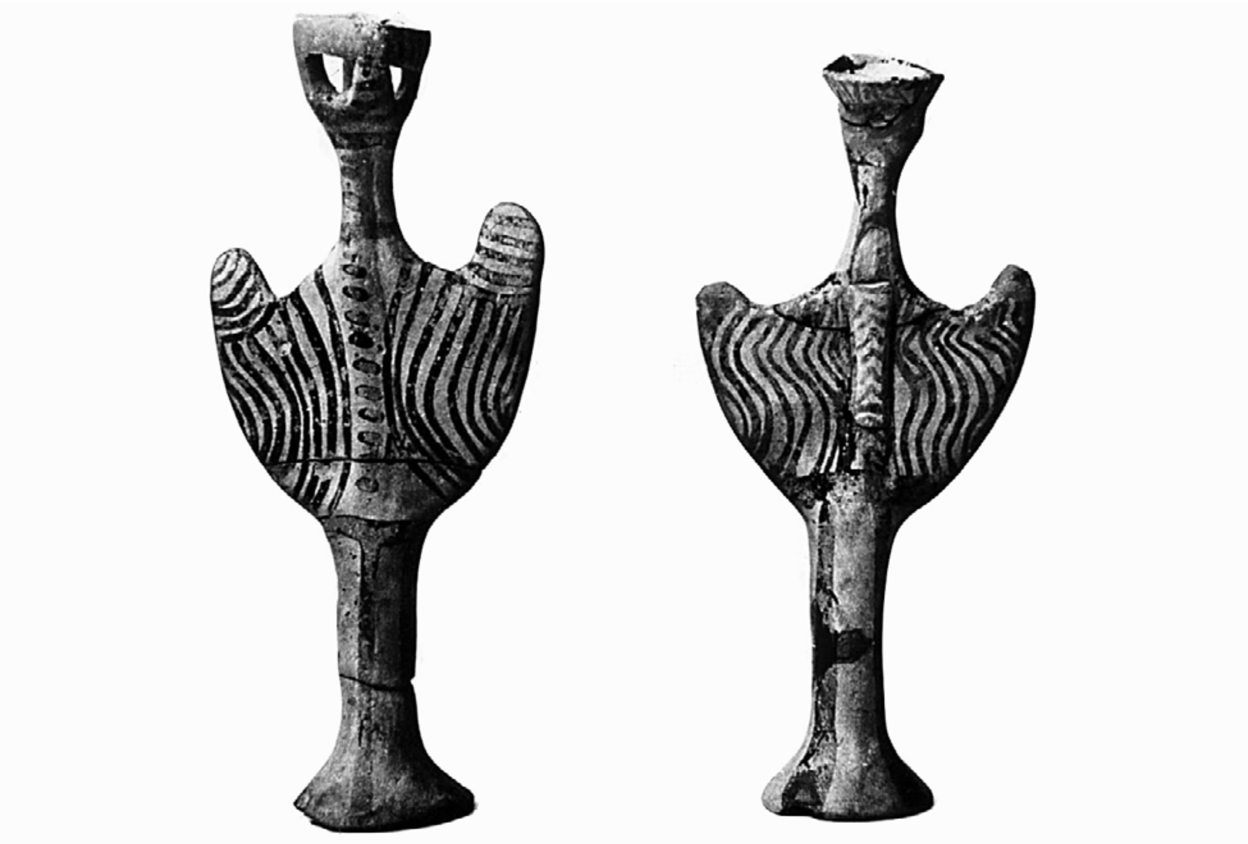

Figure 2. Psi figurines from tomb A, Lazarides, Aegina, rear. H. 0.135m (left) and 0.126m (right).

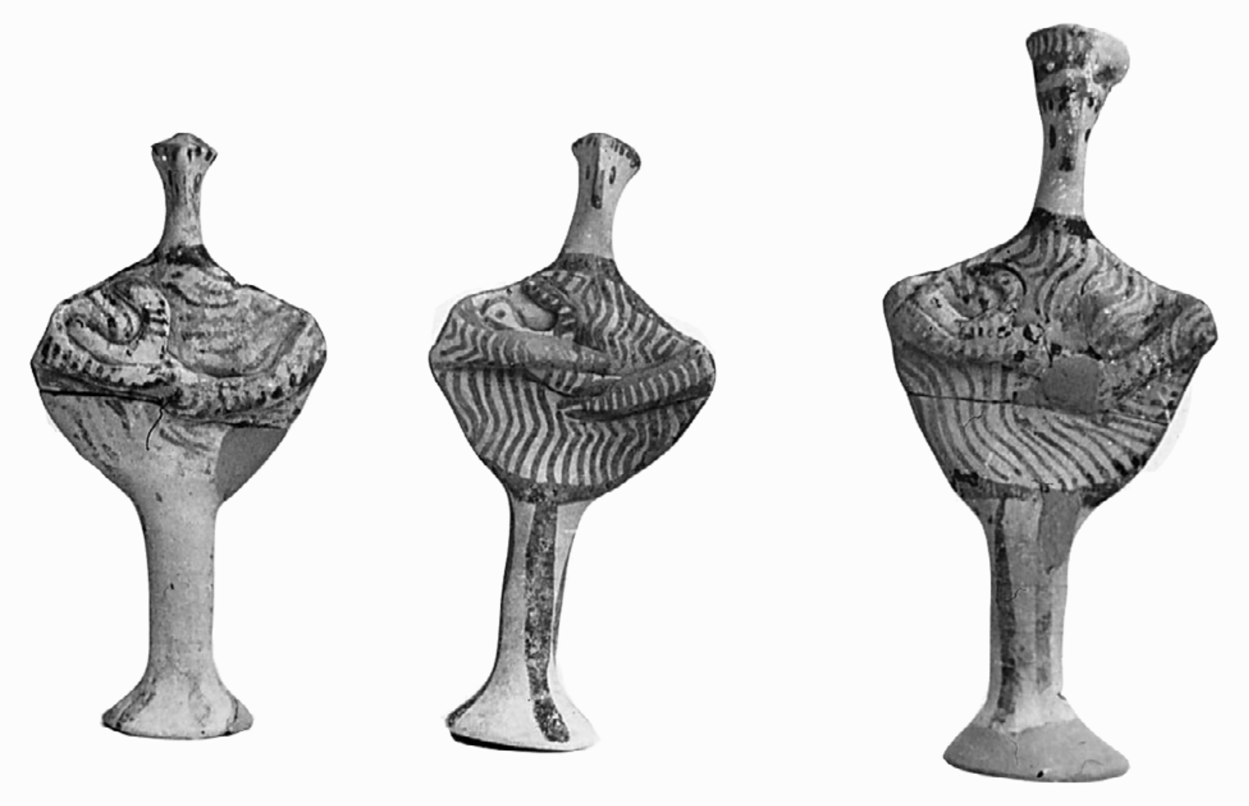

Figure 3. Kourotrophoi from tomb A, Lazarides, Aegina. H. (from left to right) 0.115m, 0.12 m and 0.145m.

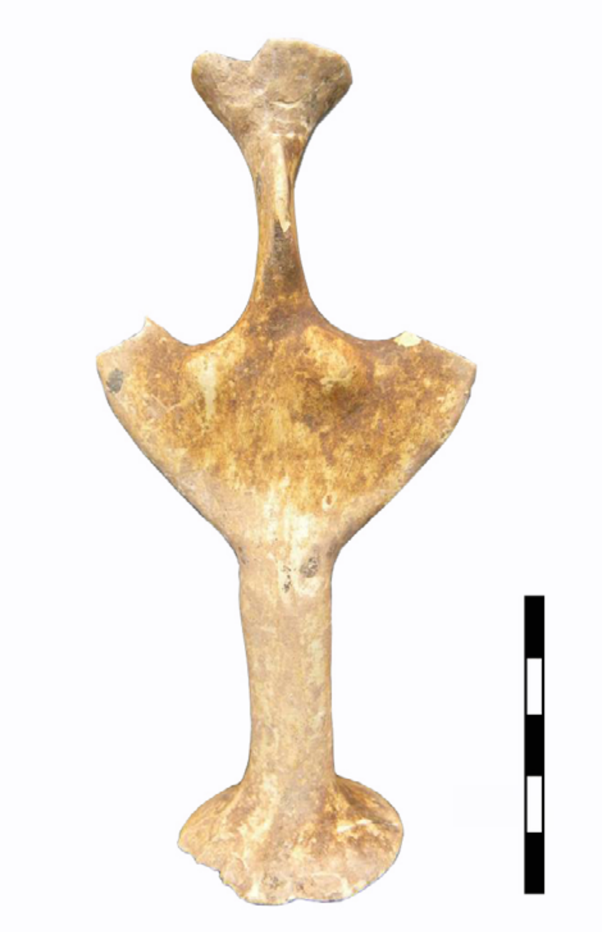

Figure 4. Psi figurine from an infant burial in the settlement at Lazarides.

areas, indoor and outdoor, characterized as sanctuaries or of cultic use. The commonest interpretation for the female figurines deposited in tombs, among many others, is that they escorted dead children to Hades as nurses or deities (French 1971: 107-108; Cavanagh and Mee 1998: 113, 129; Gallou 2005: 53-54; Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2016a: 167; Tzonou-Herbst 2002: 240; 2003: 647, 656-659, 660-661). However, only a few certain child burials with figurines were found and many other such burials without, whilst they were also discovered in adult burials (Tzonou-Herbst 2003: 649-650; Tzavella-Evjen 2014: 56). There are, moreover, cemeteries, in use for a long time, that contained very few figurines, such as the cemetery in the Athenian Agora, already mentioned, and those in Achaia, a region where figurines seem not to have been popular (Paschalidis 2018, 445; for the absence of figurines in the cemetery at Apatheia, in Troezenia, Konsolaki-Yannopoulou 2016a: 157). The accumulation of figurines in only some tombs of an extended cemetery (e.g. chamber tomb 25 at Kolonaki in Thebes, where all types of figurines were found: Tzavella-Evjen 2014: 52-53, 55) deserves indeed special attention. However, some categories of figurines should be interpreted in a more persuasive way. The triple complexes, with the exception of the fragmentary example from the sanctuary of Aphaia, which could be a votive offering in second use (for their function see Pilafidis-Williams 2009: 121, 123), and the mourners (French 1971: 150) may belong to a group of items most likely intended exclusively for funerary use. Nonetheless, the meaning of the three-figure composites cannot be ascertained. On the contrary, the latter resemble the earlier depictions on the larnakes from Tanagra and the pictorial pottery of the 12th century BC. Consequently, their deposition in a tomb should be interpreted accordingly. They may have acted as substitutes of mourners during funeral rites. Moreover, the clay models of furniture found in burials may also be explained as substitutes of real furniture, a tradition well known in historical times (Polychronakou-Sgouritsa 2003: 305). Although the deposition of furniture, mainly tables, stools, beds or biers, was rare in the Mycenaean tombs (Muhly 1996: 206-211), it was certainly a practice since early Mycenaean times (Muhly 1996: 197-202). Nevertheless, how could these models be interpreted, when found in rooms of houses, belonging both to settlements and palace complexes? Should they be considered as toys, as their context included no finds indicative of their purpose? Unfortunately, the present evidence does not support any reasonable suggestion.

Another crucial issue regards the presence of figurines in places where contextual associations could indicate their use in ritual action, such as at Mycenae, Midea, Phylakopi, Ayios Konstantinos, Kalapodi (the latter site with a clear ritual function in historical times as well, see Caskey 2009: 153 n. 36). Mycenaean figurines, dated from the end of the LHII period (French 1971: 110) to the 13th century BC, were discovered at Ayia Irini, in the settlement and in the Temple, after the end of its main, Neopalatial, use (MMIII-LMIB/LHII, Caskey 1986: 32-35). The earliest among these Keian finds represent the continuation of the Minoan tradition on the island (French 1971: 110); a naturalistic figurine should be specifically noted, as she wears a diadem (French 1971: pl. 13c-d, right; see also French 1971: 110, where she refers to this diadem as a plait around the edge of the head) reminiscent of the one seen on the enthroned person of the great gold Tiryns ring and of Minoan figurines (cf. Rethemiotakis 1998: 122, 124; Pilali-Papasteriou 1992: 250, 39-40, 255, 59, of unknown provenance). On the contrary, the LHIIIA2 examples indicate the change and the complete adaptation to the characteristic Mycenaean trends of the 14th and the 13th century BC. Typical Phi and Psi figurines, bovines, hand- and wheel-made (Caskey 2009: 168 fig. 15 no. 20), other species of animals, such as sheep and dogs, birds, the model of a seat and a dolphin were brought to light. Of special interest is the dolphin from the LHIIIC level of room 6. The room was provided with a rectangular construction, plausibly identified as an 'eschara' (Caskey 2009: 156-157, 159). The dolphin is a unique item, made of white very clean clay, with burnished surface, engraved eyes and naturalistic modeling, definitely an heirloom (Caskey 2009: 156, 168 fig. 15 no. 21). This artefact is not a local product; it is an exceptional figurine, with only scanty early parallels such as the dolphins of faience on the ostrich egg from grave V of Circle A and a few more (Sakellarakis 1990: 292 figs 31-32, 293 figs 36-39, 302-306). Its date is difficult to ascertain; still, it may be dated to the 15th century BC, as depictions of dolphins were used repeatedly on the LCI pottery (and LCII?) and in the miniature wall paintings from Akrotiri and Ayia Irini. However, naturalistic representations of dolphins are noticed on seals, found in contexts of the 14th century BC (cf. CMS I, 259/Inv. Nr 1782, 261/Inv. Nr 1795, 207/Inv. Nr 6423, CMS V, I, 176/ without Inv. Nr). Unfortunately, these seals cannot be dated according to their context, as they are often heirlooms. After all, the dolphin's presence there is curious; this extraordinary find might well support the hypothesis that Dionysus was worshipped in the Temple during the Mycenaean period (Caskey 2009), as dolphins were closely linked with this god, even in his chthonic character.

To sum up, according to the recent evidence from Attica, Aegina and Ayia Irini, it emerges that there are a few idiosyncratic figurines, such as the triple groups, which were discovered mostly in tombs, some of them definitely accompanying infant burials, with other common offerings, among which were ordinary figurines. They probably expressed local, extremely limited, beliefs and were used as substitutes of persons functioning as some deities of the historical era, such as the Fates, the Graces or the Hours. Moreover, there are figurines from various sites of the same region, such as Aegina, with different morphological trends, a fact relating probably to workshops and preferences of commissioners. Additionally, the worship of later deities may have started in the LH period, even in an early phase, and the clay dolphin from the Temple at Ayia Irini may be indicative.

While the new evidence offers new insights, our understanding of the use and significance of Mycenaean figurines remains elusive. Several questions, such as the presence of the same type of figurine in locations of totally differing function, such as burials, ordinary rooms, storerooms, workshops, sanctuaries, cannot be answered.

However, for the figures, such as those from Mycenae, Midea, Tiryns, Phylakopi, one may hypothesize that they were used during official rites, in 'organized sanctuaries', even though they were occasionally found in ordinary locations. For the figurines, both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic, such an assumption is much more difficult, as in a few instances they seem to partake of both aspects of cultic celebrations, official and popular.

In the end, even though scholarly study on Mycenaean figurines has benefited considerably from the new data, it seems that it will continue in a frame of doubt for the matters of symbolism and worship; I believe that French's statement that the Mycenaean figurines must be approached in association with their context and not vice versa (French 2009: 18-19) is as pertinent as ever; nonetheless, while we may have a good context, as it is evident in some cases, this still takes us no closer to solving the riddle of the figurines' role.

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Mount Lykaion (Arkadia) and Mount Oros (Aegina): two cases of Late Bronze Age sacred ‘high places’

Eleni Salavoura

Introduction

The observation by Gabriel Welter (1938a: 14), one of the excavators of Oros, on the similarities between both the architectural plans and the nature of the deity worshiped at the sanctuary of Zeus Lykaios in Arkadia and the shrine of Zeus Hellanios on Aegina, provided the inspiration for this paper. Apart from the fact that during historical times both cults were intricately connected to the father of the gods, who is directly linked to the sky and weather, hence his cult practiced on peaks, the arrangement of the structures is similar: the late Classical and Hellenistic buildings occupy the lower slopes (stoa and xenon or ‘hestiatorion’, which in the Hellenistic period was replaced by a Π-shaped columned structure on Oros, and a stadium, stoa and hippodrome at Lykaion) and each has an ash altar at the top (Figures 1, 2).

Both sites have now been excavated, albeit partially, and material of the Late Bronze Age has come to light, enabling us to investigate the use and function of such ‘high places’ in mainland Greece before the first millennium BC, as well as the question of whether the roots of these cults lie deeper. We should note that the quality of the documentation provided by both sites is uneven: the study of the prehistoric material from the altar of Lykaion is ongoing, while the data from Oros is derived solely from excavations carried out before the Second World War.

The data

Lykaion

Lykaion is the most significant sacred site in the whole of Arkadia (Jost 1985: 180-183). From the summit of Profitis Elias (1382m), a large part of the Peloponnese is visible. To the north are the lowland areas running up to the Erymanthos and Kyllene ridges, to the east-southeast are the Megalopolitan basin and the Taygetos mountain, to the south is the Messenian plain and to the northwest the plain of Elis. No temple was ever constructed at the top of Prophitis Ilias, which is not, however, the highest peak of the mountain range, although it always functioned as an open-air sanctuary with an ash altar (Figure 2). This follows the general rule according to which mountain shrines are more popular in Arkadia (Voyatzis 1999: 136, 138-140). George Mylonas proposed that the altar of Lykaion, the so-called *γῆς χῶμα* (Paus. 8, 38, 7), was the development of a prehistoric open-air sanctuary of the mound type (*ἕρμα),* similar to those depicted on the gold ring from Vapheio and the glass-paste plaque from the tholos tomb of the Genii at Mycenae (Mylonas 1966: 143-144, 166, figs 123 no 12 and 126 no 24; 1977: 50-51, figs 14, 32). The two columns east of the altar were crowned with gilded eagles in historical times. The columns with the eagles were, according to Mylonas (1943: 127; Mylonas 1977: 51), Cretomycenaean remnants and referred to the ‘epiphany’ of the deity in the form of birds.

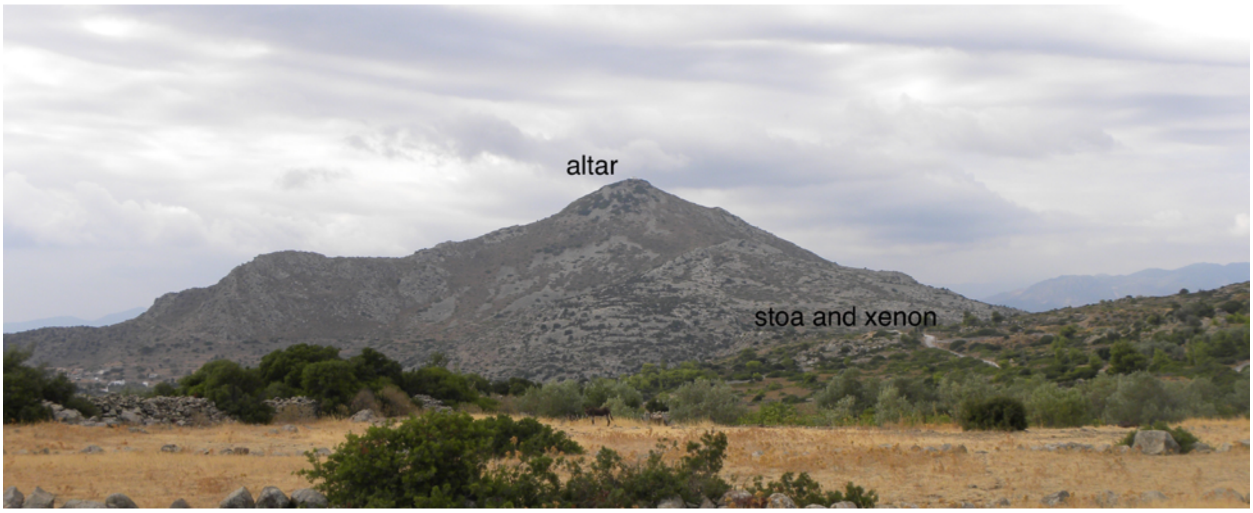

Figure 1. Mt. Oros (view from northeast).

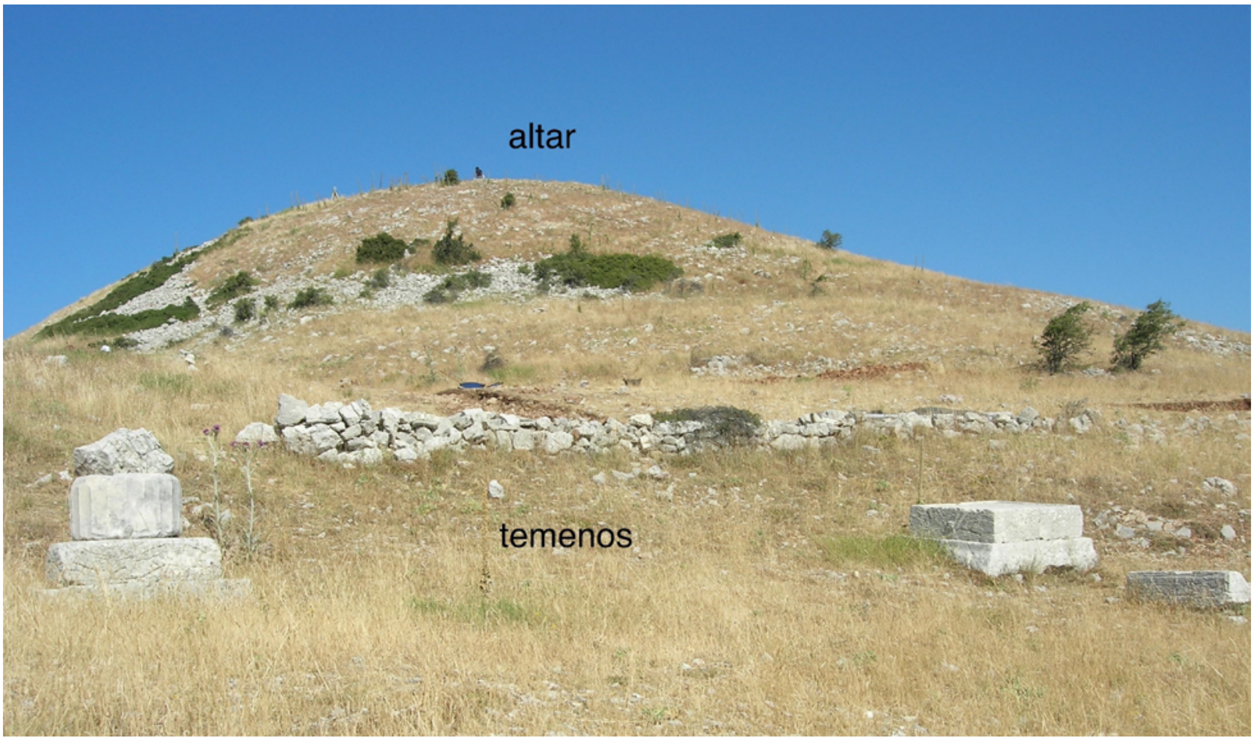

Figure 2. The altar and the *temenos* area on Mt. Lykaion (view from east-northeast).

In 1903-1904, Kourouniotis' (1904: 166, 177) excavations proved that the summit was really an ash altar, with a diameter of about 30m and a height over 1.5m, but the earlier dedications uncovered were small tripods and bronze statuettes of the 7th century BC from local workshops.

After more than a century, the recent (2007-2010) excavations conducted by the Universities of Pennsylvania and Arizona and the 39th Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities have attested the use of the altar since Mycenaean times, if not earlier (Romano and Voyatzis 2010: 10-17; 2014: 569). According to the available data, the ash altar was continuously used from LH II B to the Hellenistic period. Although Final Neolithic and Early Helladic finds are present, they are found mixed in almost all layers (Romano and Voyatzis 2014: 581, 584-588, 628-629, 631; Morgan 2008-2009: 27; Morgan 2009-2010: 41). By contrast, the Mycenaean finds are stratified and most belong to the LH III A2–B and C phases. The material, currently under study, includes hundreds of kylikes, goblets, stemmed bowls, deep bowls, mugs and cups, two askoi -a shape associated with ceremonies- human and animal terracotta figurines and other small finds, all found together with burnt animal bones (Romano and Voyatzis 2010: 13; 2014: 581-584, 589-610, 615-617, 631). The Submycenaean/Messenian 'Dark Age' phase I is well represented as well as Protogeometric pottery (Romano and Voyatzis 2014: 591). A small iron double axe of the late 11th–10th century BC was also found (Romano and Voyatzis 2010: 14; 2014: 620-621, fig. 28).

The examination of the bone fragments revealed that the kinds of animals sacrificed -mainly goats and sheep- and the specific parts selected for dedication, femurs, patellas, and tailbones, remained constant over the centuries, suggesting that the cult practice was part of an ancient ritual (Romano and Voyatzis 2010: 14-15; Starkovich *et al.* 2013: 502-503, 510).

The type and quantity of the finds, and the clear stratification from LH IIB onwards exclude the possibility that they belong to a later deposition, and demonstrate that rituals were taking place at the mountain peak, associated with offerings, and most probably with the in situ consumption of food and wine. New C-14 results have revealed that burnt bones are also found in early Mycenaean phases (Starkovich *et al.* 2013: 510-511), and, since evidence for burnt animal bones from the Bronze Age in general is extremely limited -it includes a few sites such as Eleusis, Apollo Maleatas, Pylos, Methana, Mycenae and possibly Tiryns (Hamilakis and Konsolaki 2004: 144-145, with full bibliography)- they suggest the continuity of this ritual practice spanning many centuries at Mt. Lykaion.

Lykaion lies at a point where the territories of Arkadia, Messenia and Elis meet, although the region up to Phigaleia and Apollo Epicurius was undoubtedly Arkadian in antiquity. This region, the southwest part of Arkadia and the northernmost of Messenia is a *terra incognita* in prehistoric times. Until now, apart from the finds from the extended cemetery at Palaiokastro (Demakopoulou and Crouwel 1998: 269-283; Spyropoulos and Spyropoulos 2012: 260-261) we knew almost nothing about this area. Recently, at least two more chamber tombs cemeteries have been located, in the district of the modern villages of Kakouraiika, Bardaki and Sekoulas, on the northern bank of the Alpheios river, along the natural route leading from western Arkadia to Elis (Salavoura 2015: 199-203). All are at a distance of at least 10 km from the altar, so the hypothesis that communities of a wider region worshipped a common deity on Lykaion sounds reasonable (Figure 3). The only excavated cemetery, that of Palaiokastro, was in use during EH, MH and Late Helladic, but flourished during the LH IIIC middle and late phases, possibly also during Submycenaean and Protogeometric times.

The LH pottery and metal finds prove that this region was part of the Western *koine* of mainland Greece, and had contacts especially with Elis and Achaia and indirectly with the Cyclades, Dodecanese, Crete and Cyprus (Demakopoulou and Crouwel 1998: 281-283; Mountjoy 1999: 296-299). The recent finds from the region of Olympia (Kladeos and Ayia Triada) in particular show the close connections with western Arkadia, as one can identify among the pottery from the two regions not only the same workshops, but also works by the same potter (Salavoura 2015: 438-439, fig. 14). The valley of Neda, a mountainous and rugged place, is considered to be the borderline with Messenia, bearing negligible traces of habitation (McDonald and Rapp 1972: 109, 161-162). In contrast, the valley of Soulima is the second in terms of population density in the Pylos region, due to its rich resources (Hope Simpson 1981: 135; 2014: 37-38; McDonald and Rapp 1972: 139, 162 and fig. 9-3). The fortified settlement of Malthi was inhabited from MH to LH III C and even in Protogeometric. East of Malthi, at Vassiliko-Xerovrysi a LH II tholos tomb was constructed (Hope Simpson 1981: 138; 2014: 28, 38, 40), while more recent excavations unearthed a Mycenaean citadel with large tholos tombs on the imposing hill Metsiki, near the village of Psari, in Trifylia (Hatzi-Spiliopoulou 1996-1997: 535-538: they are the largest in the Soulima valley and they have been constructed since LH I).

Further north, in Ayios Elias, near the village of Chalkias, new groups of small tholos tombs have come to light (Hatzi-Spiliopoulou 1996-1997: 539; Vikatou 2006: 195-199). At a greater distance from Metsiki lie the sites of Mandra and Kato Melpeia (Hope Simpson 1981: 141; 2014: 27). The Stenyklarian plain, the northernmost Messenian plain, was also at its acme in the Late Bronze Age (McDonald and Rapp 1972: 109, 140, 162-163 and fig. 9.3). The existence of tholos tombs in northeast Trifylia, a short distance from each other (Psari, Malthi, Chalkias, Peristeria, Kopanaki-Akourthi) demonstrates that this region was densely populated (Figure 3).

Thus, the picture of Arkadia as an isolated and backward region is gradually being reconsidered, as is that of northern Messenia. It may be not coincidental that we have no clear picture about habitation during historical times, nor do we know where the centre of this area, the Parrhasia, a region with indistinct boundaries even in historical times, lies although the nation (*ethnos*) of Parrhasioi is seen as one of the oldest (Strabo 8.8.1). The cult of Zeus Lykaios was a cult of Parrhasia and acquired its pan-Arkadian or perhaps its pan-Hellenic character no earlier than the 5th century BC (Jost 1985: 184).

Oros

Oros, the highest peak on any of the Saronic gulf islands (532m.), also holds a prominent position. It is a very conspicuous landmark throughout the Saronic gulf, the east coast of the Peloponnese and Attica (Frazer 1965: 266). It dominates almost the entire island, while overlooking Sounion and the west coast of Attica, the island of Salamis, the region of Megara, the Corinth Isthmus, the small deserted islands of the Saronic Gulf and, on a clear day, Piraeus and Athens. In the west, Epidaurus, the mountains of the Argolid, Poros, Methana and even Hydra can also be seen.

The first to identify the mountain top as the ancient Hellanion Oros (Paus. 2. 30. 4) was the scholar Andreas Moustoxidis (1831: 163), who made the first survey in 1831, locating around the peak the remains of a circular building or double (?) semicircular enclosure (Figure 4), as well as the ruins of old buildings on the slope.

The first excavation was by Ludwig Curtius and Adolf Furtwängler in 1905 the oldest pottery finds from which date back to the Mycenaean era (Furtwängler *et al.* 1906: 473-474). Furthermore, a hoard of bronzes was found in one of the houses (Curtius 1950: 266), but more specific details about it were unfortunately not published at the time. In 1933 Gabriel Welter conducted a more extensive excavation, and from his investigation came the only published drawing of the settlement, which seems to cover almost all the space south and east of the chapel on top and to the end of the terrace (Welter 1938a: 14-16, fig. 7). Welter attributed it to the LH IIIB period, although a sherd housed in the Collection of the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology at the University of Birmingham, with a possible place of origin of Mount Oros, has been dated to LH II–III A1 (Hope Simpson 1981: 32-33; Pilafidis-Williams 1995: 232). Moreover, it is not certain that all the walls and buildings belong to the same phase. Welter (1938a: 14) notes that he cleaned the crevices of the rocks, where he found sherds dating from the Geometric to the Roman period, confirming the continued use of the peak throughout antiquity. Andesite stone blocks with clear traces of carving were incorporated into the small chapel of Profitis Elias (Frazer 1965: 265-266; Welter 1938b: 91-92). In addition, northwest of the chapel, at the north end of the summit, large blocks of an ancient

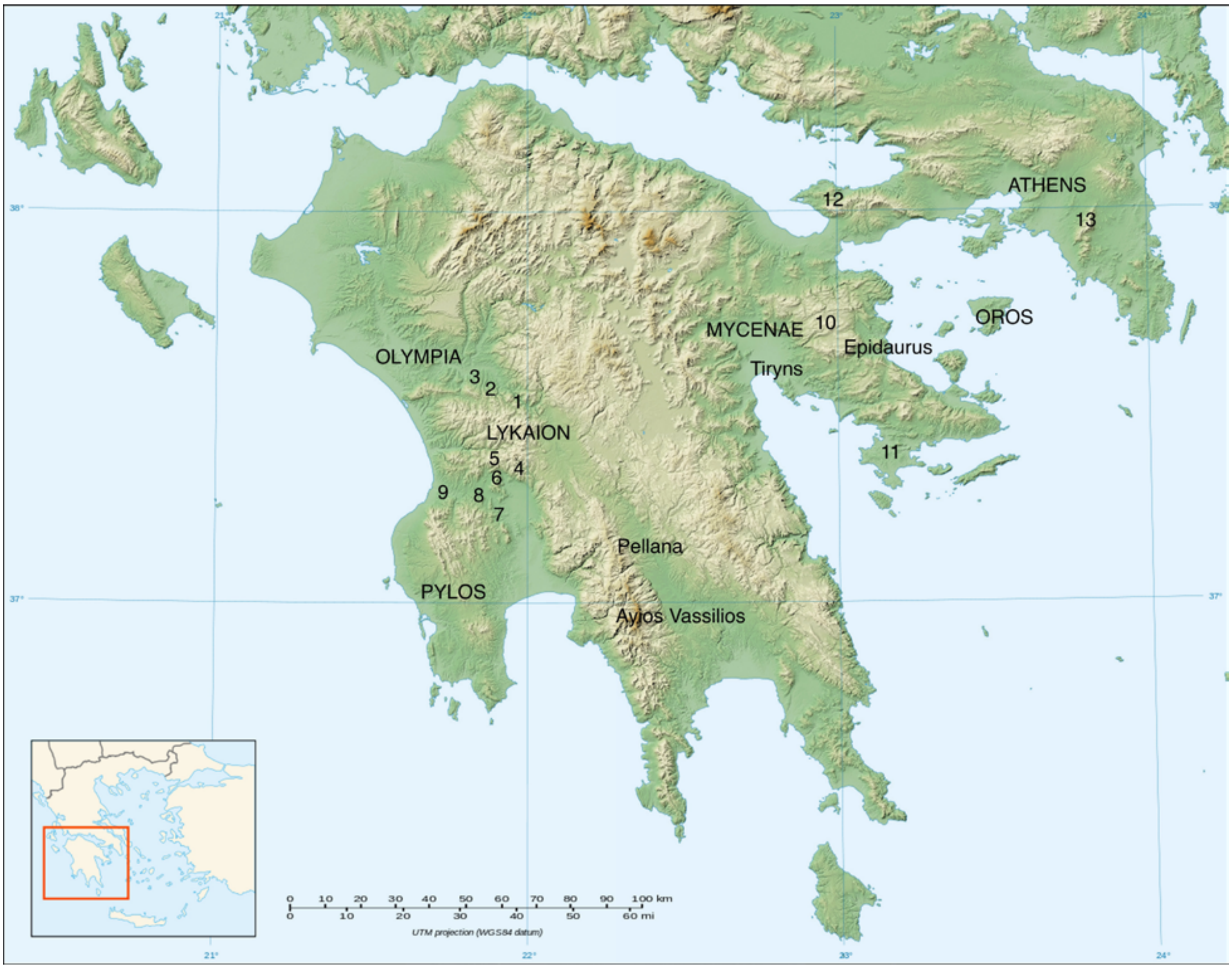

Figure 3. Map of the Peloponnese with the LH sites close to Lykaion and other peaks mentioned in the text (1. Paleokastro, 2. Bardaki, 3. Kakoureika-Sekoulas, 4. Melpeia, 5. Chalkias, 6. Psari, 7. Malthi, 8. Kopanaki, 9. Peristeria, 10. Mt. Arachnaion, 11. Mt. Kranidi, 12. Mt. Loutraki, 13. Mt. Hymettos).

building are preserved in situ to a height of two rows of blocks, and these have been attributed to a small temple (Goette 2003: 23) or a guard house.

Recently W. Gauss (2007) examined the finds of these older excavations and his resulting study bridged many of the gaps. Of special interest are the metal finds, because they make clear which is the hoard of bronzes that was brought to light by Curtius and Furtwängler. These metal finds include the upper part of a type F sword, parts of four bronze razors, and at least five, almost intact, bronze sickles or sickle knives (Gauss 2007: 130-132, figs 13-22). In addition, three bronze chisels, two enigmatic bronze objects, probably awls and an oval copper tray (mirror) were found (Gauss 2007: 132, figs 23-27). It is also worth mentioning that among the metal finds are a small and intact iron knife and a stone mould, for casting small double axes, which are also dated to the Mycenaean period (Gauss 2007: 133, fig. 30).

The main find linking Mount Oros to a cult site is a small female figure (Pilafidis-Williams 1995: 229-232, figs 1-3; Pilafidis-Williams 1998: 80) dated to LH III A2–B. It finds its closest parallels in material from the temple of Aphaia and the Argolid, mainly from the sanctuary of Apollo Maleatas at Epidauros and Mycenae (Pilafidis-Williams 1995: 231, figs 4-5). W. Gauss (2007: 129, 134, fig. 8) identified the possible part of a second larger figure with the same decoration of wavy vertical lines, although he allows for the possibility that this is a sherd of a straight-sided alabastron.

The archaeological evidence makes clear that the summit functioned as a habitation area and Gabriel Welter suggested that it was a refugee settlement. Its long life exceeds two centuries (LH III A–III C early), which is remarkable, bearing in mind that the site is inhospitable, except for the fact that it provides a view of the wider area. The height and the exposure to strong winds make habitation, especially during the winter, problematic, while the lack of water is an additional disadvantage. The great built cisterns (known as *souvales*) that the sanctuary used in historical times are low down, on the northwest foothills, quite far from the summit.

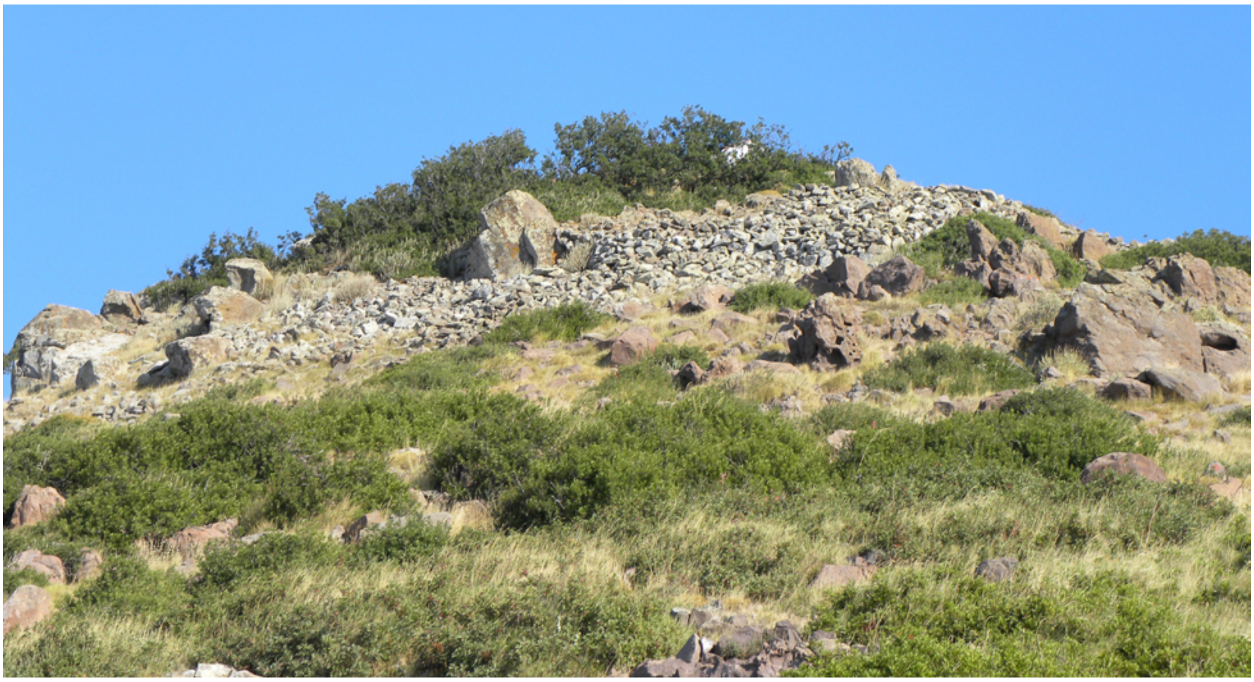

Figure 4. The enclosure around the summit of Oros.

Moreover, the perivolos around the summit was not a defensive wall but rather a strong terrace wall (Figure 4). In addition, the choice of living in a high place, such as Mount Oros, at the time of the so-called Mycenaean koine, which is characterized not so much by the absence of great instability, but rather by an economic boom, raises questions. During the same period the nearby LH settlement of Lazarides was also flourishing, as were two other settlements at Kylindras and Perdika, known only from their cemeteries (Figure 5). At about the same time, the hill of Agios Antonios was fortified with an impressive 'cyclopean' wall (Salavoura 2014: 55-57, 69-70, 77-91, 97-100). However, it is not unreasonable to assume that during the Mycenaean period there were a few buildings in the restricted area of the peak, connected with a shrine, as in the nearby sanctuary on Mount Kynortion in Epidaurus. There, the three rooms west of the altar and under the classical temple are associated with sacred buildings (Lambrinoudakis 1977: 190, pls 118-119; 1981: 62), while the Early and Late Helladic settlement was higher up, at the top of the hill. There are a few traces of prehistoric habitation on the northern foothills of Oros, in undisturbed layers beneath the ramp and the monumental staircase of the Hellenistic sanctuary, according to a brief excavation conducted by Hans Goette (2003: 24). Given the presence of the clay figure of a local workshop (Pilafidis-Williams 1995: 234), a piece of gold jewellery, now lost (Welter 1938b: 26; Wolters 1925: 12), the hoard of bronzes, as well as the stone mould for casting small double axes, the site is more convincingly interpreted as a shrine, especially considering that workshops and storerooms are usually connected with shrines within the settlements (Hägg 1992: 29-32, especially 30).

The dual or multiple use of sites at high altitudes is not an isolated phenomenon. It has been suggested that Troulos on Keos (Caskey 1971: 392-395; Cherry *et al.* 1991: 100 site 37; Peatfield 1983: 273 fn. 1) and Profitis Elias at Mycenae (Hägg 1990: 192, fn. 36; Schallin 1996: 167, fig. 32; Schliemmann 1878: 146-147; Wace 1921-1923: 431) played the simultaneous role of guard-houses/patrol stations and open-air shrines. The data from Profitis Elias at Mycenae, although problematic because the site was never actually excavated, are very reminiscent in several ways of that on Oros. Profitis Elias is a naturally fortified, inaccessible mountaintop without nearby water sources, although with impressive cyclopean fortifications. For this reason, Schlieman (1878: 147) concluded that 'there must have existed on the summit a small temple of great sanctity and immense importance'. It is indeed interesting to note the testimony of the German archaeologist that in his time and in instances of great drought the crowd would ascend to the top, led by the priest, to pray for rain.

This combination of the elements of habitation and worship is also found at the sanctuary of Poseidon on the island of Poros. A bronze figure of the smiting god type (Reshef), circular pieces of gold foil and miniature votive double axes can be ascribed to a cult place, if they are not later depositions (Hägg 2003: 333-335; Wells 2003: 339-340; 2009: 146-147). However, the architectural remains show that a small LH III C settlement was also built in and around the area of the Archaic sanctuary. In a partially excavated LH III C middle to late building west of the perivolos, a large boulder and fragments of LH III C middle and late drinking vessels were interpreted as a place for a

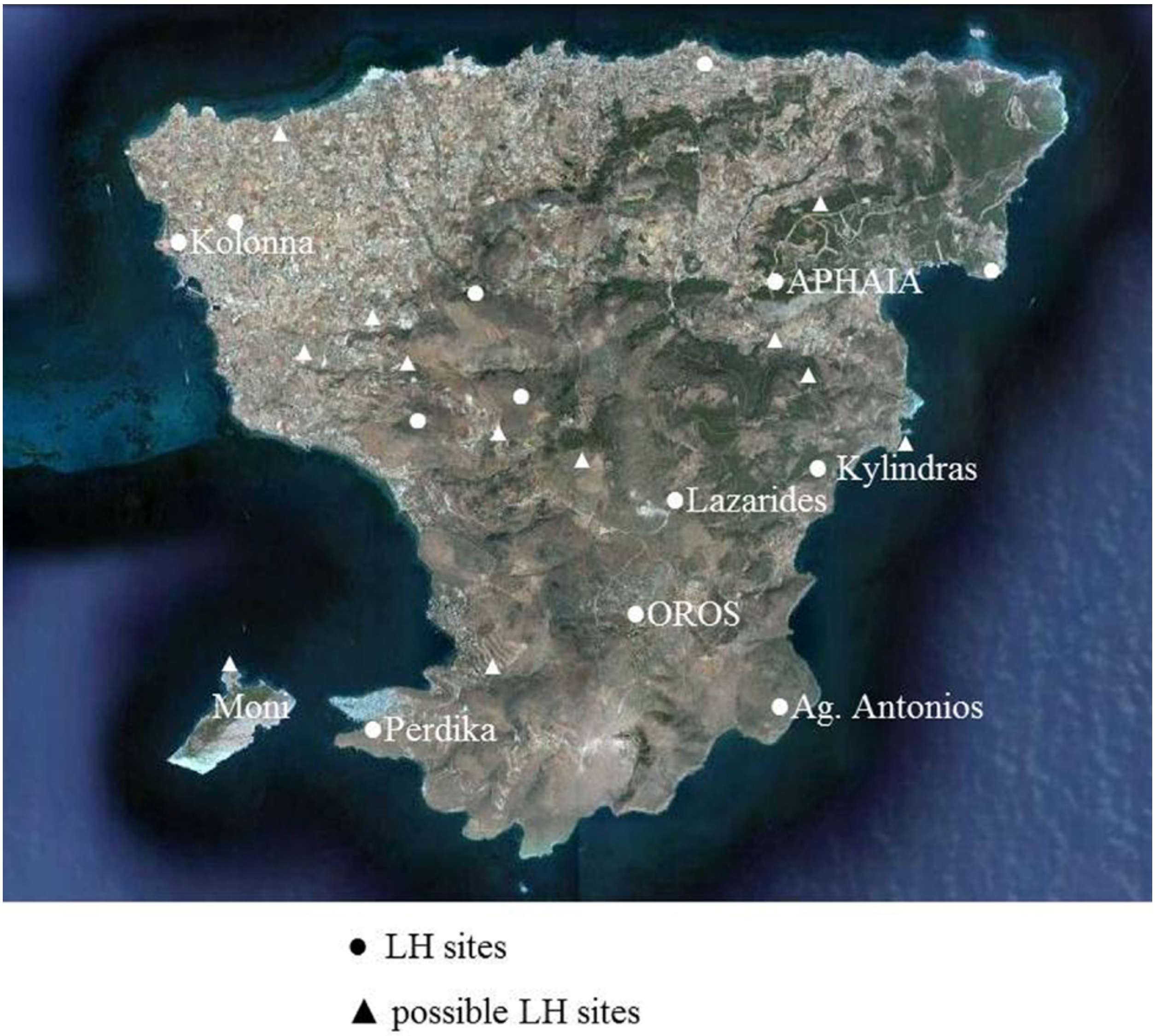

Figure 5. Late Helladic III sites on Aegina island.

house cult (Wells 2011: 212 and fig. 3), but fragments of six LH III C late kraters found underneath and to the west of the c. 4th BC temple, in a Late Geometric deposit (*bothros*), are an enigmatic group, which represents earlier activity and suggests some kind of continuity at the site from the very end of the Bronze Age until late in the Early Iron Age (Wells 2011: 213-214). This continuous use and the ability to link the present to the past is for the time being missing for Mt. Oros.

Discussion

Similarities and differences

Based on the above remarks, the data from the two sites seem to converge at the following points. Both sites, Lykaion and Oros, are landmarks for the wider region, while also offering views over the rural land and the upland pastures of the surrounding areas over a large radius. They are imposing but their height is not prohibitive so as to climb on them. They can be classified as open-air shrines, a type known in mainland Greece. Eminent scholars who have studied the issue thoroughly have used the terms ‘hill shrines’ (Peatfield 1983: 273, fn. 1), ‘open-air hill sanctuaries’ (Pilafidis-Williams 1998: 149), ‘isolated hill-top or hill-side sanctuaries’ (Wardle 2003: 318) or the more general ‘high places’ (Rutkowski 1986: 201) to describe such shrines, which included nothing more than an altar and an enclosure, not necessarily built. The existence of shrines on high and prominent peaks should be separated from those on lower hills, such as the sanctuary of Aphaia on Aegina, Apollo Maleatas in Epidaurus or Troulos on Keos, which are regarded as hill shrines (Peatfield 1983: 273, fn. 1) or from potential sacred sites in Arkadia (Salavoura 2015: 295-304). They should also be separated from the Minoan peak sanctuaries, since their similarity to Lykaion and other peaks in mainland Greece refers mainly to topographical affinities, i.e. their general prominence and (inter)visibility, the sanctuary should be seen from the region it served, and it should also 'see' that region; their altitude also varies considerably but they are within reasonable walking distance of the nearby settlements or even of modern villages (Hägg 1993: 189; Nowicki 1994: 34-35; Peatfield 1983, 274-275; 1990, 119-120; Rutkowski 1986: 93); and, finally, they rarely preserve built structures.

On the contrary the type of votives are quite different, since metal figurines of adorants and human limbs, stone and zoomorphic libation vessels, as well as concentrations of pebbles, are absent from the sanctuaries of the mainland. Furthermore, most Minoan peak sanctuaries belong to the Pre- and Protopalatial period, while those of the Neopalatial phase are more directly connected with the palaces and villas of the wider region (Hägg 1993: 189-191; Nowicki 1994: 40-41; Peatfield 1990: 126-131). None of them survives the destruction of the palaces in the late 15th–early 14th century BC, so they are not a contemporary phenomenon but rather an earlier one in comparison with those of mainland Greece. However, Peatfield (1983: 277) and Nowicki (1994: 41) note that they were not irrevocably abandoned, as there was a small revival of the cult on a few sites late in LM III. Rutkowski's (1986: 153-155, 185) view that 'almost all peak sanctuaries come within the altitude regions associated with the summer transhumance of sheep and goats' and that 'peak sanctuaries came into existence mainly to relieve the fears and cares of the shepherds and cattle breeders' may be valid for Lykaion, but not necessarily for Oros.

Both of the shrines under study lie outside the immediate orbit of the palaces and it is reasonable to presume that they fulfilled the religious needs of the great mass of the population of the surrounding areas and were not controlled by a central palatial power. This seems to be most clear for Lykaion, since, according to current views, the territory of the Pylian kingdom, as delineated in the Linear B archives, stretched roughly from the river Neda in the north to the river Nedon (in modern Kalamata) in the west and any suggestion that the control of the Englianos administration extended further east, beyond Taygetus, or up into Arkadia to the northeast seems implausible (Bennet 1998: 122 and fig. 61). As for Aegina we may have some reservations, since it is not improbable that at least during LH III the island was controlled by a mainland centre in the Argolid (Deger-Jalkotzy 2009: 51-52). Nevertheless we should remember that the incorporation of depictions of open-air sanctuaries in the iconography of signet-rings – the most characteristic examples being the famous gold ring from the acropolis of Mycenae found by Drosinos, the gold ring from chamber tomb 91 of Mycenae and the gold ring from the Vapheio tholos tomb (indicative see Mylonas 1966: 141-144, fig. 123) – expresses the attempt of the ruling class to show that it is not disconnected from the countryside and its population, which in fact is what feeds the centralized and redistributive palatial system. The artists of gold rings and engraved gems apparently served the ruling class and created compositions reflecting the wishes of their patron. Mylonas (1966: 145) mentions that in most examples of enclosures and dancing scenes the men represented wear leggings, and sometimes the enclosures are built over rocky ground. These elements might indicate that these are on hilly sites far from regular settlements, but it is more reasonable to look for such open-air shrines closer to the palaces in the first instance.

In both cases the cult is associated in ancient literature with the tribal leaders of these regions, on Aegina with the forefather Aeacus (Paus. 2, 29, 7-8) who populated the island, and in Arkadia with Lykaon (Paus. 8, 2, 1), son of Pelasgos and grandson of the mythical king Arkas. Furthermore, Aeacus and the priest on Lykaion brought rain after a prolonged drought, through magical rituals performed as an emergency and not on a regular basis. Both peaks are connected to Zeus during the historical era, but the continuity of the cult at the same place does not necessarily confirm the worship of the same deity. Zeus's role as 'gatherer of clouds' (*νεφεληγερέτης)* goes back to Homer, but Zeus's nature in Linear B tablets (Knossos Fp 1 and Fp 5, Pylos Tn 316, Khania Gg 5) is obscure. It is not at all certain that he was associated with rain, but he was most likely primarily worshiped as the god of the clear sky and light (Cook 1914: 63-68; Jost 1985: 249-269; Langdon 1976: 79; Zolotnikova 2013: 4-8, 41, 83, 100-106). The earliest find from Lykaion linking him with the storm is the bronze statuette of the god holding a thunderbolt, dated to the late 7th century BC (Kourouniotis 1904: 180-184, figs 8-10). In the historical era, Zeus was worshipped at a few peaks as the god of rain, although his role was more usually as god of weather phenomena and, alongside this, as Almighty Zeus (Langdon 1976: 81). Moreover, Lykaion belongs to the climatic zone of western Greece, where there is plentiful rain. So-called thermal storms are frequent, especially during the summer months. By contrast, the dry and arid climate of Aegina is better suited to Zeus *Omvrios* (Showery).

Furthermore, the data from the two sites betray strong differences, which indicate that, aside from local features, homogeneity and standardization, especially regarding popular rituals and ceremonies, cannot be taken for granted. For Lykaion there is now strong evidence for burnt sacrifices, the consumption of food, and for libations, while on Oros, a similar altar is still lacking. Apart from a few sherds of skyphoi, pithoi and coarse ware pottery, vessels for the preparation and consumption of food and drink are not recorded as having been found at this site, not even cooking pots, which are the Aeginetan product *par excellence*.

On Oros the metal finds are plentiful, while on Lykaion are non-existent. The altar yielded only simple vessels, animal and human clay figurines and an abundance of burnt bones. An LM II rock crystal lentoid seal of a bull comes from the upper unstratified layers (Romano and Voyatzis 2014: 616-617, fig. 26). Worship on Oros is associated with what may be a small installation (tools, spindle whorls). If we attribute part of the architectural remains to a sanctuary of the Mycenaean period, then it seems that the cult was practiced here in a more organized way. The female figure points to the same conclusion.

Moreover, Oros seems to be more closely and obviously connected to the nearby settlements, but this may be the result of our better knowledge of the settlement patterns of the island and not a reflection of the actual situation. The decline of LH III Kolonna favoured the development of the south-southeast part of the island. At the same time, the sanctuary of Aphaia also flourished, on the top of a hill lower than Oros, but related to the eastern part of the island and Attica, while Oros mainly served the south and west (Figure 5). In addition, the finds at Aphaia point to a female deity of fertility and childcare (Pilafidis-Williams 1998: 135-142). On Lykaion, the connection with the nearby settlements is unclear, but many long-lasting sanctuaries, such as Isthmia, Kalapodi and Olympia, were established close to communication routes and in areas marginal to the palatial world (Morgan 1996: 57). In western Arkadia, during the historical period, the numerous rural and mountain shrines ensured the stability and unity of the communities of the wider area -civic groups could also undertake processions to these sanctuaries to promote the same goals- and the existence of many local sanctuaries explains why the city-state institution appeared relatively late in that region (Voyatzis 1999: 150-152). Finally, a significant difference is that the altar of Lykaion was continuously used in the Palatial and Post-palatial periods, and into the Dark ages, while on Oros there is a gap from LH III C early to advanced Geometric.

Conclusion

The catalogue of sites that are connected to possible mountain-top worship before the 8th–7th century BC includes among others the highest peak of Mount Arachnaion (Profitis Elias) in the Epidaurus region, the summit of Hymettos, the western ridge of Mount Loutraki opposite Corinth, and Profitis Elias at Kranidi (Figure 3 nos 10-13; Langdon 1976: 7, 74, 86-87, 107-109, 112; Polignac 2002, 119-122; Psychoyios and Karantzikos 2015: 261-271; Eder 2016: 178-179). The possible cult function of another group of mountain tops (Langdon 1976: 100-113, pl. 1) is impossible to prove, since, as Robin Hägg (1993: 192) noted, the Mycenaean sherds found at these sites are of very simple manufacture and without any significant context; they cannot prove the existence of a cult but are tantalizing hints of what may eventually be found.

We are not able to understand the existence or extent of cult on high peaks on the mainland, as they have not yet been studied systematically, in contrast to the Minoan peak sanctuaries. From the initial evidence, it appears that the characteristics of the cult may not always be recognizable, nor are we able to assert with confidence whether the ceremonies conducted there reinforced the ties with a centralized authority, other than unifying the regional communities. Aside from attracting desirable mates, labour or allies, the rites marked important events in the cycle of the life of the communities. Whether rituals and offerings were made only at certain times such as during a period of drought or on a special festival day and not at a regular time basis is also unknown (Langdon 1976: 77).

Peak cults are a global and timeless phenomenon. The ways and means, the customs and rituals may change, but the need that gave birth to them was, until about half a century ago, identical. Mountain tops are closer to the divine and the rural populations lived with an indissoluble bond and a dependence on nature. It is also true that Elias is the general heir-apparent of Zeus on mountain tops (Langdon 1976: 7). The temenos area on Lykaion, a few meters beneath the altar, bore the name *Taverna* because there stood the wineshop during the celebrations of the patron saint in the modern era (Kourouniotis 1904: 159). A kind of local feast, with on-site food consumption takes place still today on Lykaion, as well as on Oros. The observation, made since the ancient times (Thphr. *Sign,* VI 1, 24) that, if a cloud settles on the temple of Zeus Hellanios on Aegina, then usually rain follows on the dry island, in Megaris and Attica, would not have escaped the attention of prehistoric farmers and breeders. Until recently, in times of great drought, which are not rare, the Aeginetans carried the Virgin Mary's image in procession, continuing in some way the tradition of Aeacus (Harland 1967: 17-18).

Even if we are not able to reconstruct the prehistoric rituals, the communal consumption of food and drink, that could strengthen the bonds within the group of adorants, seems ultimately to be the way through which an ordinary person approaches the divine. Feasts in the palatial centres and flourishing settlements aimed mainly at strengthening the prestige of the 'elite' class (Palaima 2004: 234-236; Wright 2004). The animal species selected for sacrifice and specific ritual practices in a palatial centre and in an outlying sanctuary are not the same (Hamilakis and Konsolaki 2004: 147). Peak cults such as those on Oros and Lykaion are a more spontaneous and pure expression of popular religion, associated not with the display of power but with the propitiation of nature and its forces, and with reinforcing the ties among the local communities on the occasion of a celebration. These upland sites contribute to advancing the 'archaeology of the mountains' in Late Bronze Age mainland Greece and enable us to comprehend better the complementary role that such communities had in Mycenaean society, outside the major centres.

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The 'Minoan Goddess with Upraised Arms' today

Theodore C. Eliopoulos

In the effort to determine and assess the popular or folk elements in a certain religion, one has to take into account on the one hand the place this religion holds in a worldwide perspective of religious evolution, and on the other, whether this religion derives from revelation, is based on doctrine and possesses Sacred Scriptures, as with Christianity and the monotheistic Abrahamic religions in general, or, if it arose from a spontaneous growth, as with ancient Greek religion. Although usually assumed, this does not imply a near total breach between Christianity and ancient pagan religions (on this see Berner 2009: 36, with reference to the 'modes' theory of religiosity), because the latter had their belief systems as well. In a coordinated religious system, popular beliefs may be functional parts of its structure or, on the contrary, in some other religious system they may be pushed back to a liminal zone of it. It is very noteworthy, demonstrating the constant fluctuations and interdependence of humanity's symbolic pursuits, that religions based on high theology and structured on sophisticated and complicated dogmatic principles, may at times officially encompass popular, almost primitive 'magical' elements, telescoped from the dawn of human existence, as in the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic extraordinary litanies to ask for rain, beg for fine weather, drive away storms, and *pro quacunque tribulatione* (Thurston 1913: 447).

At one end of the scale, 'popular' elements may be understood as an age-old substratum of official religiosity, even before words were uttered, antedating therefore conscious religious behaviour and religious guilds, and lingering on until the present, occasionally surfacing and perhaps emanating from primeval structures of the human brain. Recently a 'bio-cultural study of religion' has been investigating such issues (cf. Martin and Pachis 2009 and Voland and Schiefenhövel 2009). From an anthropological point of view, the interaction of human 'rational' religious faith to human irrational metaphysical or symbolic instincts in the same person, or the widely divergent mental and psychic abilities of the members of humanity in general, can correspond to a dichotomy of higher and baser ('popular') religious expressions. Nietzsche's Apolline vs. Dionysian distinction concerning aesthetics could be seen as related to this recurrent tidal motion of the janiform human psyche. One line of research could also examine the popular religious traits of Christianity as a continuation of religious pagan 'official' characteristics: thus, the official traits of one religion survive as popular or side-traits of its ensuing religion. In this respect the period of the transition of pagan religions of antiquity to Early Christianity seems crucial (van den Broek 1979; the volume by Vrijhof and Waardenburg 1979 contains contributions on the theme in Christianity and other living, contemporary religions, as well as theoretical approaches). In our postmodern times, official Christian dogma and observances may, under our very eyes, be transformed into pious popular beliefs of the *ante portas* officially atheistic future. This state experiment has in any case already been carried out during the French revolution and in Eastern Europe for much of the 20th century AD, and admittedly has failed.

Nilsson (1940) in his classic study of Greek popular or 'folk' religion described and expanded on the basic themes that Greek popular religion confronted. Most have to do with the urgent needs for the preservation of life. The principal human actors thereof are the rural man, i.e. the peasant in his field or with his herd, the man at his home, the man in great need (war, sickness), the man (or rather woman) in ecstatic circumstances, the 'man in the street' of cities, people at *panegyreis*, and those engaged in superstition and divination. Mikalson (1983; 2010) examined more closely the everyday practice of religion in the Greek urban environment, based primarily on the written sources.

Now, moving back to the distant past of the long extinct Greek religion itself, the diagnosis of popular elements in the Greek Bronze Age religion(s), devoid as they are of continuous meaningful religious texts, is naturally susceptible to additional dangers of misinterpreting its material remnants. Scholarship has already recognized two levels in Mycenaean religion, official and popular, the latter manifested in humble material remains such as the countless figurines (e.g. Hägg 1995). A very interesting point of departure since the time of Kerényi's (1961-1962) seminal article on the Minoan-Mycenaean *Festkalender*, is the various festivals detected in Linear B documents. The heortology thus reconstructed in a tentative and quite uncertain manner is a *par excellence* field for correlating iconographical, archaeological and textual Bronze Age Aegean popular religious elements (e.g. Boulotis 2009).

One such important material remnant, or artefact, that can be discussed in this framework is the coroplastic type of the 'Minoan Goddess with Upraised Arms' (if one finally interprets all of these idols as goddesses, cf. infra), so distinct that it has been in recent decades abbreviated with the acronym MGUA. This type has been an object of research as long as the entire field of Minoan religion, since the first MGUAs from Prinias were published as stray finds as early as 1901 by the Swedish archaeologist and scholar of religion Sam Wide (1901; it is notable that Wide had otherwise little connection to Cretan archaeology). This publication was immediately followed by the find from Gournia, where by contrast the idols were recovered in an architectural milieu having enough elements to be interpreted as their abode (Alexiou 1958: 185-187; Gesell 1985: 72, no. 10; Nilsson 1950: 80-82, fig. 14; cf. Eliopoulos 2004: 82). In the 1930s two large groups of MGUAs were excavated at Gazi by Marinatos and Karphi by Pendlebury and his team (Alexiou 1958: 188-195; Gesell 1985: 69, 79, nos. 5, 22; Marinatos 1937; Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938: 75-76; Prent 2005: 139-143). This was the decisive point in forming an important corpus of 'goddesses' that brought powerfully forth the iconographic conditions of Minoan religion in its latest stage. In 1958, the late Stylianos Alexiou studied the theme comprehensively, in a now classic work, motivated by a suggestion from Marinatos. His study spanned the whole of the Minoan period, with its Eastern connections, reaching 'Early Greek' times, and was focused on iconography, chronology and the meaning of the gesture of upraised arms. During that period of the 1950s another important group was found at Kannia, near Gortys (Alexiou 1958: 195-202; Gesell 1985: 77-79; Rethemiotakis 1998: 39-41, 55). The happy coincidence of the Gazi and Karphi finds of the 1930s was repeated on an even larger scale around the 1990s, with the groups of MGUAs from Vrondas (1988), Kephala Vasilikis (1994-1996) and Halasmenos (2000). At about this time, Rethemiotakis's study (1998) on Late Minoan terracottas appeared, which dealt with the older material, earlier than the Vrondas, Kephala Vasilikis and Halasmenos finds. Since then, some fragments of MGUAs have also come up in a few other parts of Crete, or been recognised while studying older material, while at Sissi a possible LM IIIB small shrine, or rather sacristy was recently found, with snake tubes and kalathoi, ritual objects that usually surround goddesses, without however goddesses (Gaignerot-Driessen 2014: 495-496, figs 5-7).[1]

The coincidence of the Vrondas, Kephala Vasilikis and Halasmenos finds has been even more favourable than the finds of the 1930s because the MGUAs were found in their well-preserved shrines, parts of respective settlements which are not more than an hour's walking distance from each other and from Gournia, all situated in that area, so significant for Cretan history, the northern part of the Isthmus of Hierapetra, and all dated to the 12th century BC. The largest group, that from Vrondas, has, since its excavation, been minutely studied by its excavator Geraldine Gesell, still another happy coincidence since she was already an important scholar of Minoan shrines and related artefacts, and particularly of this type, and of the ritual equipment connected with it (Gesell (1976; 1985: 47-56; 1999; 2001). In these three related groups of MGUAs from Vrondas, Kephala Vasilikis and Halasmenos, therefore, we now possess an exemplary synchronic group of cult objects. Some new elements, unknown from the MGUAs excavated previously, such as their excessive multiplication at Vrondas, or the first enthroned goddess from Kephala Vasilikis (Eliopoulos 1998: 308-309, fig. 14; 2004, 87; 2011: chapter 6), indicate the range of surprises that may occur in the future. The detail desired nowadays in a publication, not envisaged in the 1930s, has hopefully only postponed for the immediate future the overall discussion of these 'goddesses' on the firm basis of all the excavation data.

The objectives towards which the research procedures on the MGUAs inevitably converge are twofold: on the one hand, the attempt to interpret them, which can potentially range between a cult image, a votive image of a deity or even an image of a mortal adorant (as argued recently by Gaignerot-Driessen 2014: 506-518), and on the other, the meaning of the presence of these goddesses, if one ultimately interprets all of them as such, in the Cretan sanctuaries of the Dark Ages. The assessment of their presence within their sanctuaries will enlighten the generative processes of Greek religion of historical times, both 'Olympian' and 'popular'. The term Olympian may at first seem premature, even anachronistic to be used in this connection. Gilbert Murray writing a century ago called this pre-Olympian stage of Greek religion, *Saturnia Regna*, predating what he perceived as the orderly and neat 'Olympian Stage' (Murray 1912: 15-53). Since then much water has flowed under the bridge, and the discovery of a good many of the Olympian deities in Mycenaean records may in the future lead us to acknowledge that the Greeks already had their organised pantheon in the 2nd millennium BC, well before their gods were 'given' to them by Homer and Hesiod (Herodotus 2.53). This is, however, still a vexed subject.

The first scholar to have dealt with MGUAs, Sam Wide (1901: 249), considered them as clearly idols of a female deity, bypassing the opinion of Furtwängler that a similar small idol from Zakros (?) published by Mariani depicts a mourner, the latter idea understandably springing to the mind of a classical archaeologist. An important argument of Wide (1901: 247, fig. 2) was the snake wrapped around a detached raised hand from Prinias. Afterwards, and especially with the great finds from Gazi and Karphi, the divine identity became a conviction, since the excavation data were clearly conducive (Alexiou 1958: 252-275; for a detailed discussion of the question of interpretation, cf. Prent 2005: 190). The year 1901 saw the publication of Evans's 'Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult' (Evans 1901), the publication of Wide and the discovery of the shrine at Gournia. It is interesting for the history of interpretative archaeological thinking to note the view of Evans, who insisted until the end that these idols from Gournia and Prinias, the only ones known when he was writing the *Palace of Minos*, should be dated to LM I, the era of Minoan *floruit* (Evans 1935: 160-163; cf. nearer the truth Evans 1921, 508. The publication of the idol from Pankalochori by Marinatos in 1933, which, with its well-preserved painted decoration, could indicate the true LM III dating of the type, apparently came too late to be discussed in the *Palace of Minos*). Although the foundations of Minoan-Mycenaean religious studies that he himself had laid, the 'Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult', emphasized the non-figurative aniconic aspect, which the later Greeks themselves regarded the original stage of their religion (Burkert 1985: 88, n. 53 for references), Evans very quickly invested a multitude of arguments and his weighty authority to recognise anthropomorphic Minoan divine figures in some prominent idols, such as the faience 'snake goddesses' of Knossos (Evans 1921: 500-509; he even calls the second faience statuette 'votary' or 'double' of the snake goddess, cf. Nilsson 1950: 311) and precisely these terracotta finds of Gournia and Prinias from the coroplastic circle, through which he attempted to fill the gap in anthropomorphic portrayal of the deity at the time of the Minoan acme. The realization that they date several centuries later, towards and at the very end of Minoan civilization, was only gradual (Marinatos 1937: 289; Alexiou 1958: 186-187, although Wide 1901: 250 had already assumed a late dating for the Prinias idol), becoming possible after a closer study of the context and their proper placement within the stylistic development of LM Crete. Nilsson in the second edition of his synthesis on Minoan and Mycenaean religion in 1950 explicitly considered the idols from Gazi and Karphi not just divine images but cult statues. Commenting particularly on the idol with the poppy heads from Gazi he thought, following Marinatos, that she looks 'astonishingly Greek' (Nilsson 1950: 100, fig. 25). His main argument for the divine interpretation was the birds perched on the heads of certain 'goddesses'. Based now on the three new finds from Vrondas, Kephala Vasilikis and Halasmenos, some common traits are emerging, which even though suspected earlier were not quite evident 20 or 25 years ago:

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[1] This minute room with cult objects, part of a large LM III building complex, reminds one of the small room of the so-called 'Treasury' of the shrine of Zakros palace, integrated, almost hidden as it is in an extended edifice. It is not a bench shrine and looks back rather to the features already known from Neopalatial Crete than to Dark Age ones; on this distinction, observable mainly after 1200 BC, which is a chronological focal point, see Eliopoulos 2004: 86, 88.

First, at each site, most of the MGUAs are found together, housed in a well-defined independent or semi-independent building. Although it is not always completely autonomous, its spatial relationship with the settlement is constant: it is close to the edge, not the centre of the village, being in a sense the 'last' building (clearly at Karphi, Halasmenos and Vrondas; by contrast, at Kephala Vasilikis it seems to be the 'first' building one reached at the top of the hill), and an effort is made to place it at the edge of the hill, near the cliff (not so clearly at Vrondas). At Kephala Vasilikis, Vrondas and Halasmenos there is a distinct free space in front of the cult buildings.

Second, this building is canonically, even mandatorily, equipped with built benches on which the MGUAs and in most cases, but not all, other cult objects and utensils peculiar to this period are deposited, i.e. snake tubes (Gesell 1976), kalathoi (Gesell 1999) and *pinakes* (plaques), the members of this last class probably once painted and hanging from the walls (Gesell 2001). Sets of these cult objects (MGUAs, plaques, snake tubes, kalathoi), i.e. probably potted and fired together, were already observed by Marinatos (Marinatos 1937: 283). After much discussion, it is now certain that the kalathoi, some with horned projections on the rim, were placed on top of snake tubes, which functioned as their stands. Figure 1 shows such a reconstruction: Kephala Vasilikis Goddess no. 1 in her throne on Room's E4 eastern bench; in front of her on the floor a snake tube, on top of which a kalathos has been placed. All three objects are of the same clay, a cultic set, but the drawing is hypothetical, because the kalathoi and the snake tube were found on the benches, next to the 'goddess'.

We may suggest, with a reasonable amount of certainty, that on the Isthmus of Hierapetra in the 12th to 11th centuries BC, there existed the processes and mechanisms leading to the phenomenon, hitherto placed almost as doctrine much later, in the 8th century, of free standing cult buildings in which the cult statue stood (ναίει, lives, is the Greek word), both with a tendency towards the monumental (Burkert 1985: 88-90). From the Late Geometric incipient canonical triad of the free-standing *naos*, the cult statue (*agalma, eidolon*) inside and the altar (*bomos*) outside, the altar is admittedly still missing. A large altar-like stone table is found inside the Kephala Vasilikis building (Room E3, Eliopoulos 2003) and a smaller one was found at the 'Temple' of Karphi (Pendlebury *et al.* 1937-1938: 75, pl. XVII, 3; Eliopoulos 2003, 397). This detail is significant, because it may indicate a stage that predates the standard burned sacrifices of historical times, which however had been already initiated in the Mainland. One other detail of the 1st millennium BC that is practically lacking is a large number of small ex-votos, dedications, or ritual deposits and bothroi which may also be significant for understanding the function of these shrines. Benches, by then of old Minoan origin, and the morphology of the 'goddesses', not only the raised hands but also the tubular skirt, are elements of continuity from the Bronze Age. The characteristics

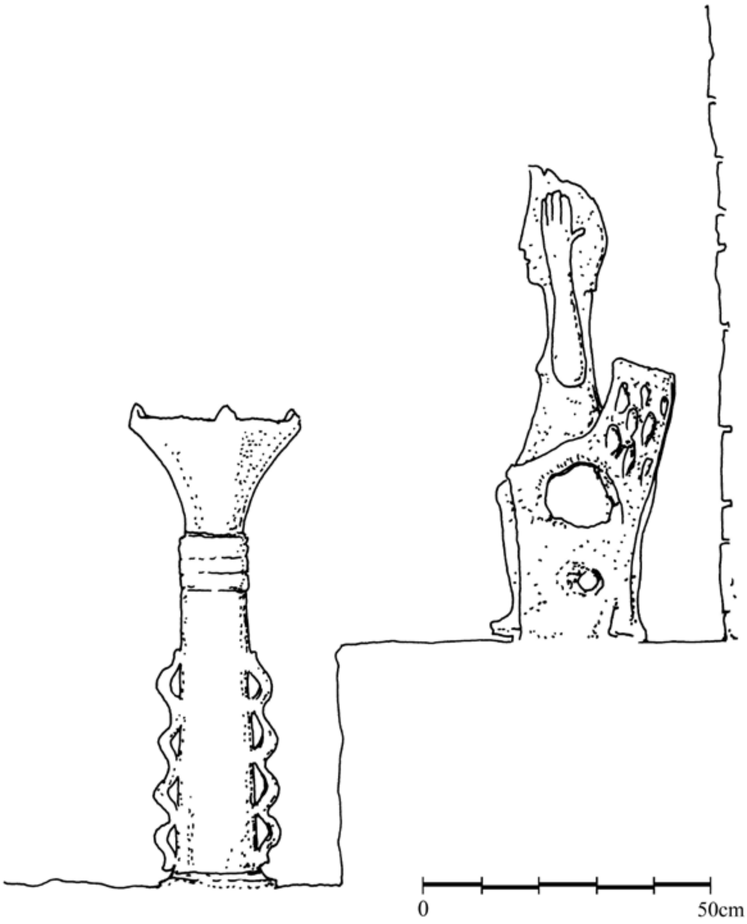

Figure 1. Kephala Vasilikis enthroned Goddess no. 1 on Room's E4 eastern bench; in front of her on the floor a snake tube, on top of which a horned kalathos. Hypothetical reconstruction. Drawing by K. Raftopoulos.

of the 2nd millennium BC however are now in a state of dissolution and reconstruction or reforming into something new: ideologically we are on the threshold -or even past it- of the historical period. For these reasons, or by following this line of reasoning, the reference to a popularizing of the older Minoan palatial goddess (Gesell 2004) could be clarified: the somewhat widespread tendency of considering these statues as plastic expressions of a putative, more popular element of worship should be treated with caution, because we may be misled by the apparent, general decay or impoverishment of material culture at this time. Exactly during this period of impoverishment and as a reaction to it, an impetus to monumentalize the idol is generated, which at Karphi approaches a height of one metre, something unprecedented for a clay Minoan-Mycenaean figure. Previously, only statues wholly or partially made of wood could have been bigger in size, excluding some individual detached members, again mainly of earlier Minoan periods, that have been assumed to come from life-size statues (significant is also a Mycenaean clay hand of natural size from Amyklaion, possibly holding the stem of a kylix: Demakopoulou 2009: 97, fig. 10:2).

The proliferation and multiplication of MGUAs at Vrondas, which after years of painstaking laboratory study have reached about thirty, while about sixteen are reported from Halasmenos (Gaignerot-Driessen 2014: 494, fig. 4, 506), is a new important factor in their study. It also stresses the opposite situation, i.e. that the average number in almost all other sanctuaries is five or six 'goddesses' (but more than the five published ones were present at the Karphi Temple: Day 2011: 45), an intrinsic fact by itself which may be significant and requires some interpretation. It may imply the idea of a nuclear divine 'family', but in this family a male god is not present. The MGUAs from Kephala Vasilikis conform to this small number. The large numbers of MGUAs at Vrondas have -as noted above and as was to be expected- contributed to resurrecting the debate as to whether they are actually all deities. In favour of adhering to the standard interpretation of accepting the divine essence of all is not so much the morphological stability of the type as rather the symbols, particularly the snakes and birds in the hand and on the head. We shall not marshal, even though it would be legitimate to do so, the evidence from neighbouring cultures, notably the Hittite, where we read in religious texts of a multitude of divine images within a temple. In our view the problem of interpretation is somewhat reminiscent of the old debate about the disclosure of the identity of the many archaic statues of youths, the *kouroi* (once all identified as Apollo) of a 7th-6th century BC sanctuary. The tendency towards a strictly sociological interpretation of religion is a trend of our times, which may just as well be used against its advocates and in favour of the classic divine interpretation of MGUAs: the postulated prevalence of aristocratic classes in the 12th century BC, after the collapse of Minoan-Mycenaean kingship housed in palatial abodes, outlines a hypothesis of a diachronic interpretation: the emancipation of these elite groups is combined with the previously described processes leading to the formation of public shrines, where the practice of consecrating a divine image is repeated by each kin for one or one and a half centuries (from 1200 BC onwards, the heyday of this coroplastic type). This could explain the large numbers, particularly at Vrondas. The absence of a male god among them conforms to an old Minoan-Mycenaean phenomenon, the preponderance in iconography of female deities. The Kephala Vasilikis enthroned idol (cf. infra), of

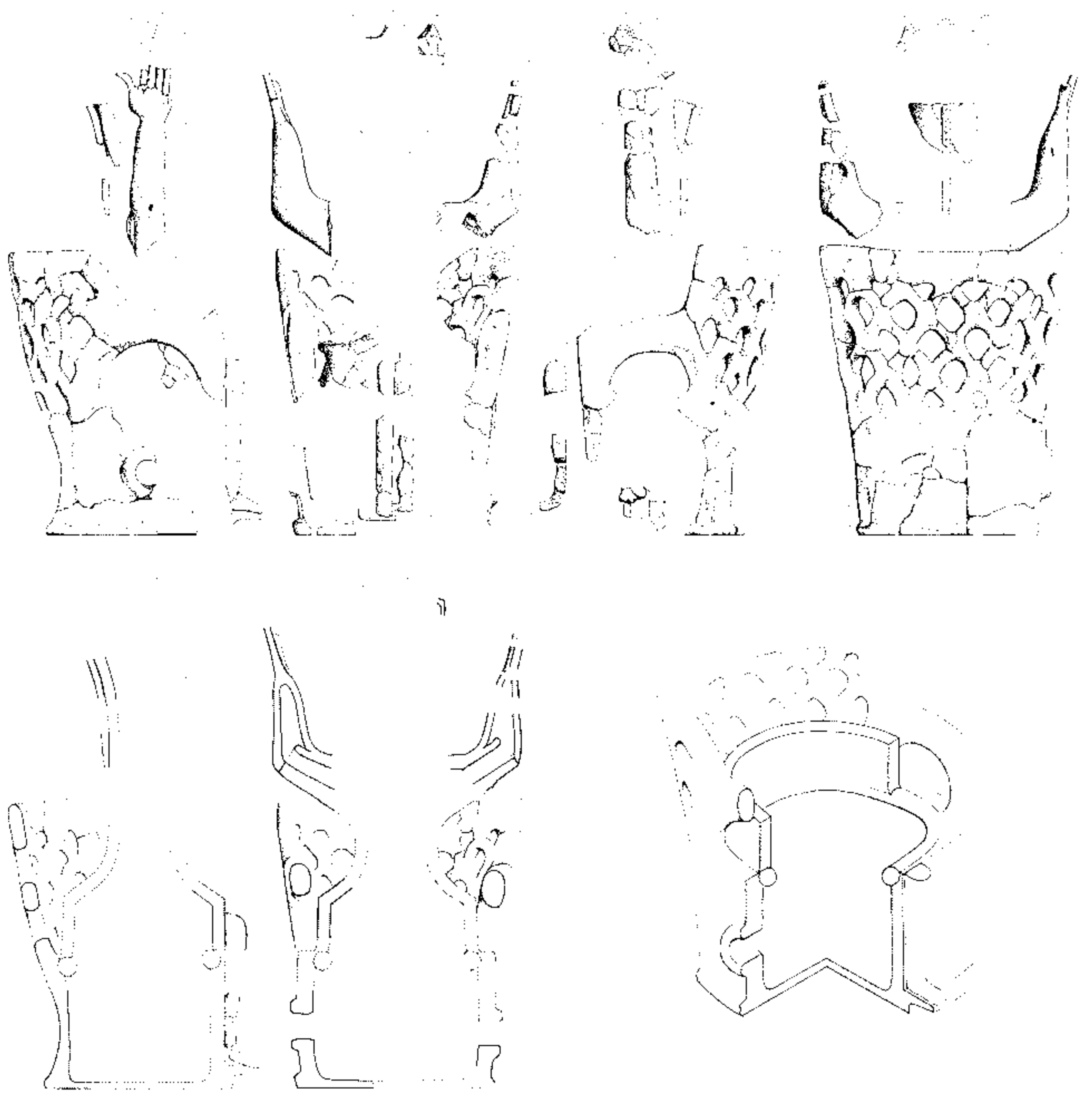

Figure 2. Kephala Vasilikis enthroned Goddess no. 1. Reconstruction drawing of front, back and lateral views, and axonometric drawing of the throne. Drawing by K. Iliakis.

which only disconnected fragments are preserved, seems to have had naked lower limbs from the knees to the feet, not covered by a long dress. One should not however conclude from this doubtful element that the statue was male.

Following the realization of the large number of such idols found together, the second surprise that occurred with recent excavations is the so far unprecedented case of the enthroned 'goddess' from Kephala Vasilikis (Figures 2-3). All MGUAs, which by now number perhaps over 70, are standing and wearing a cylindrical skirt. With the Kephala Vasilikis enthroned 'goddess' (Goddess no.1), it is possible to comment further on the major themes of this paper: the supposedly popular character of divine images and shrines of the 12-11th centuries BC, the question of the true identity of MGUA's and the realization that the ideological conditions of the historical period have by now already been reached. The very few fragments preserved of the goddess herself, in contrast to her largely intact throne, make it difficult to understand how she was combined with the throne. We can at least be certain that no whole naturalistic seated idol had been fashioned; instead, we are faced with two alternatives: a typical standing MGUA had either been attached -in this case minus her cylindrical skirt (Figure 3a) - or inserted -in this case with a standard cylindrical skirt (Figure 3b) - in the throne. When, in 1996-1997, it

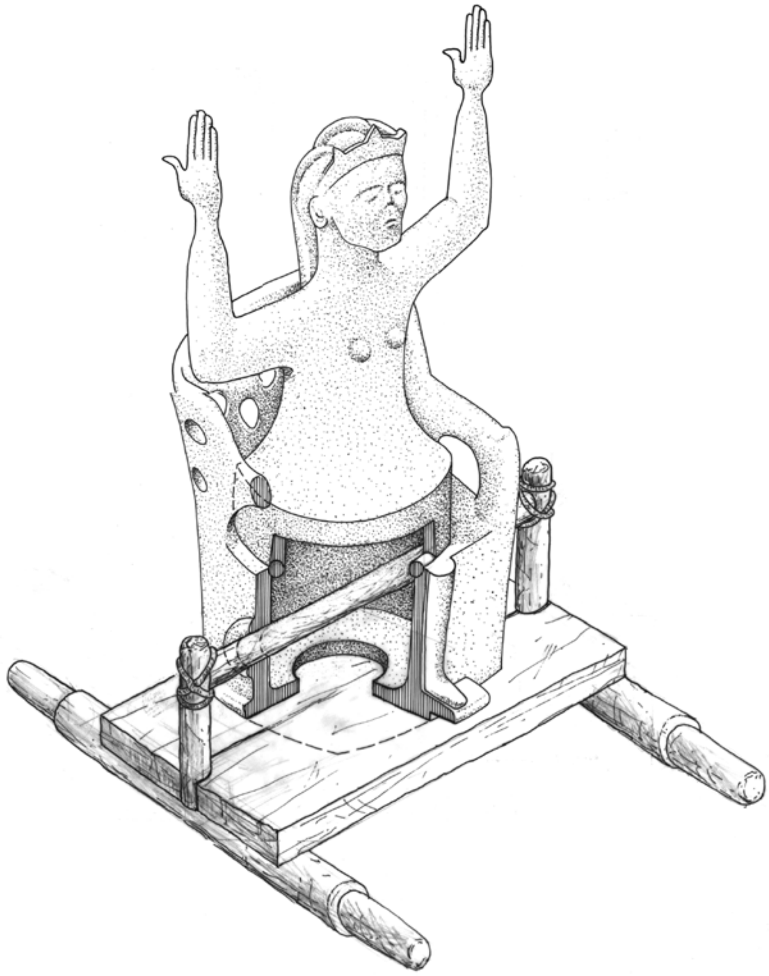

Figure 3a. Kephala Vasilikis enthroned Goddess no. 1. Tentative axonometric reconstruction. First option: the goddess does not have a cylindrical skirt and is attached on a reinforcing ring in the interior of the throne. The lateral holes of the throne are used for pegs to fasten the goddess-and-throne coroplastic unit on a wooden platform. Drawing by D. Koukoulas.

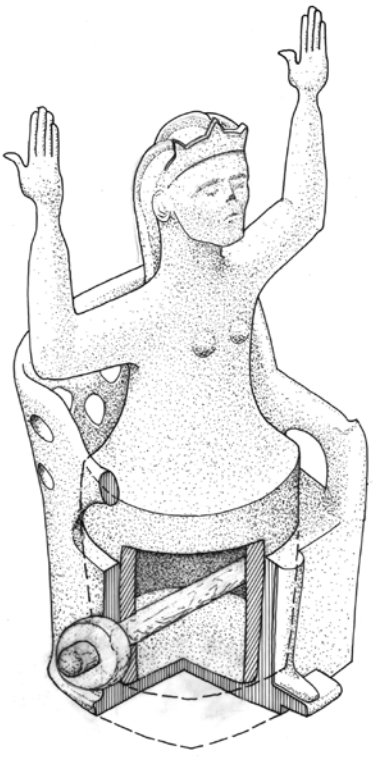

Figure 3b. Kephala Vasilikis enthroned Goddess no. 1. Tentative axonometric reconstruction. Second option: the goddess has a standard cylindrical skirt which is inserted in the throne. The lateral holes of the throne are interpreted as openings for the insertion of a wooden rod to stabilize the statue. Drawing by D. Koukoulas.

occurred to us in the laboratory of the Haghios Nikolaos Museum that we may have at hand a seated MGUA, we supposed that the strange idol from Sakhtouria (Figure 4), was perhaps such a 'goddess', detached from her throne.[2] We first suggested this idea in a lecture at the INSTAP Study Center in 1999 (Eliopoulos 2011: chapter 6.2.8). We have also already suggested (Eliopoulos 2011: chapter 6.4.3) that the five MGUAs once placed on the benches of Kephala Vasilikis Room E4 may be reconstituted or transformed into a three-dimensional group of idols in such a way as to parallel the two-dimensional scene of the Acropolis Ring of Mycenae (*CMS* I, no. 17): the enthroned Goddess no. 1 corresponds to the woman seated under the tree, Goddess no. 2, identical and of equal dimensions (Eliopoulos 2004: 86, fig. 6.6) corresponds to the standing woman offering her poppies, and the three other females who approach or surround her (of which two are smaller, perhaps girls, lesser deities, nymphs etc.) to the three smaller Goddesses nos 3, 4, and 5. This comparison, a working hypothesis only, presupposes an organic, internal connection between all five idols of Room E4, which would then be a plastic visual expression of a coherent religious idea. It also implies a continuation of Minoan-Mycenaean religious ideas over three centuries; much less than the many centuries over which e.g. Byzantine religious imagery retains its iconographical codes. The question of identifying in either case -in the 15th century ring and the 12th century idols- the deity/deities and/or mortal adorants is exactly analogous, and equally problematic.

To return to the Kephala Vasilikis seated goddess: if she was permanently attached to her throne and did not

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[2] This had been first published by Tzedakis (1967), who noted that her skirt is lacking and dated her between LM I and LM IIIA, something improbable. Hood (1978: 108-109) stated that her strange appearance was due to her having lost the cylindrical skirt. Rethemiotakis (1998: 82) noted simply that she is not intact.

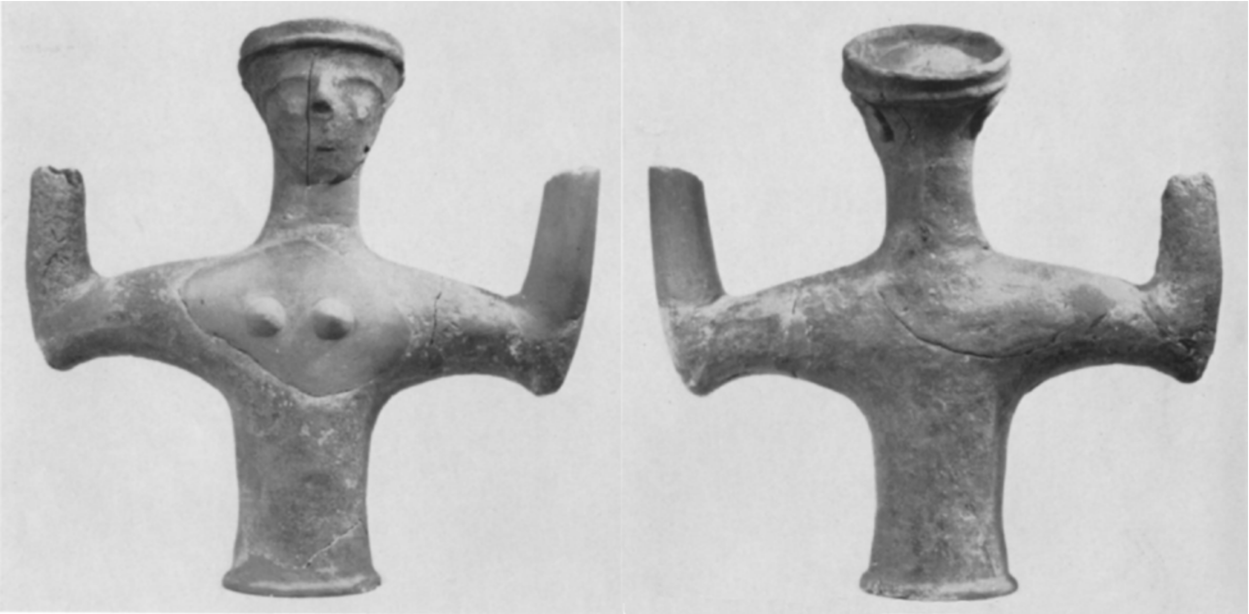

Figure 4. The idol form Sakhtouria, Rethymnon, possibly once seated in a detached throne (cf. the first alternative reconstruction of Kephala Vasilikis Goddess no. 1 in Figure 3a). After Tzedakis 1967: pl. 41.

therefore have a cylindrical skirt (Figure 3a), perhaps like the Sakhtouria idol, then the side holes of the throne could have served to fasten the goddess-and-throne coroplastic unit, using pegs, onto a wooden platform for ceremonial processions. This idea is represented in the drawing of Figure 5. We have used as a model for the poses and the pious expressions in the faces of the faithful the 1893 painting by the Russian Ilarion Pryanishnikov, entitled *Easter Procession*, in which the clergy are carrying sacred icons and the cross. In another painting, again by a Russian, Ilya Repin, the *Religious Procession in the Province of Kursk* of 1880, a portable shrine or canopy enclosing the icon of Our Lady of Kursk is carried on the shoulders. These Eastern Orthodox rites illustrate that the age-long tradition of carrying around sacred images and paraphernalia in a religious procession has survived into our times. Eastern Orthodox churches quite early relinquished the three-dimensional representation of divinity, contrary to Western Christendom: therefore, seated and standing wooden statues of Madonnas are a hallmark of the Catholic doctrine. In Sicily and Southern Italy, in particular, this ancient habit has survived with remarkable persistence. This performance, an actual *dromenon* of the Catholic Church, constitutes as a paradigm an escape from the canonical, official dogmatic rigidity of a cathedral's interior, towards secularity. This secularity is manifested through a widespread participation in the streets where the divinity descends to humanity with an emotional impact impossible in the interior of the church. If we wanted to pinpoint a specific element in the distinction between formal and folk or popular religiosity, it would be precisely the swelling of emotion in the latter. Broad popular participation in an open-air procession of divine images, even if this procession is part of the official ceremonies, creates psychological conditions for diversification from the acts performed (τὰ δρώμενα) and the sayings (τὰ λεγόμενα) in the interior of the temple. However, here as well the Christian religion stands an immeasurable distance from ancient religion as far as the function of the inner related to the outer space of the temple is concerned. In ancient religion the exterior space of the temple is the most important, and the aggregation of the worshipping community outside the temple is the central event. Therefore, popular participation here has nothing intrinsically 'popular' about it.

If again, following the second alternative of reconstructing the Kephala Vasilikis seated goddess (Figure 3b), a complete statue had been fashioned, i.e. with a cylindrical skirt which was simply inserted in the throne (only the knees, legs and feet on a footstool had been fashioned separately and attached to the throne) then the lateral holes on the two sides can be interpreted as openings for the fitting of a wooden rod to stabilize the statue. Corresponding holes would then be obligatory in the cylindrical skirt. With this alternative reconstruction, the attractive element of the procession of the seated goddess on the shoulders is redundant, but other hypotheses open up: if the statue was removable then the throne acquires an independent standing and may possess an intrinsic symbolic power of its own, even if empty, which is another diachronic symbolic theme. It is even possible that other standing MGUAs could interchangeably be placed inside the throne, or perhaps the many standing 'goddesses' only appear to be standing, whereas they too could occasionally have been inserted in wooden

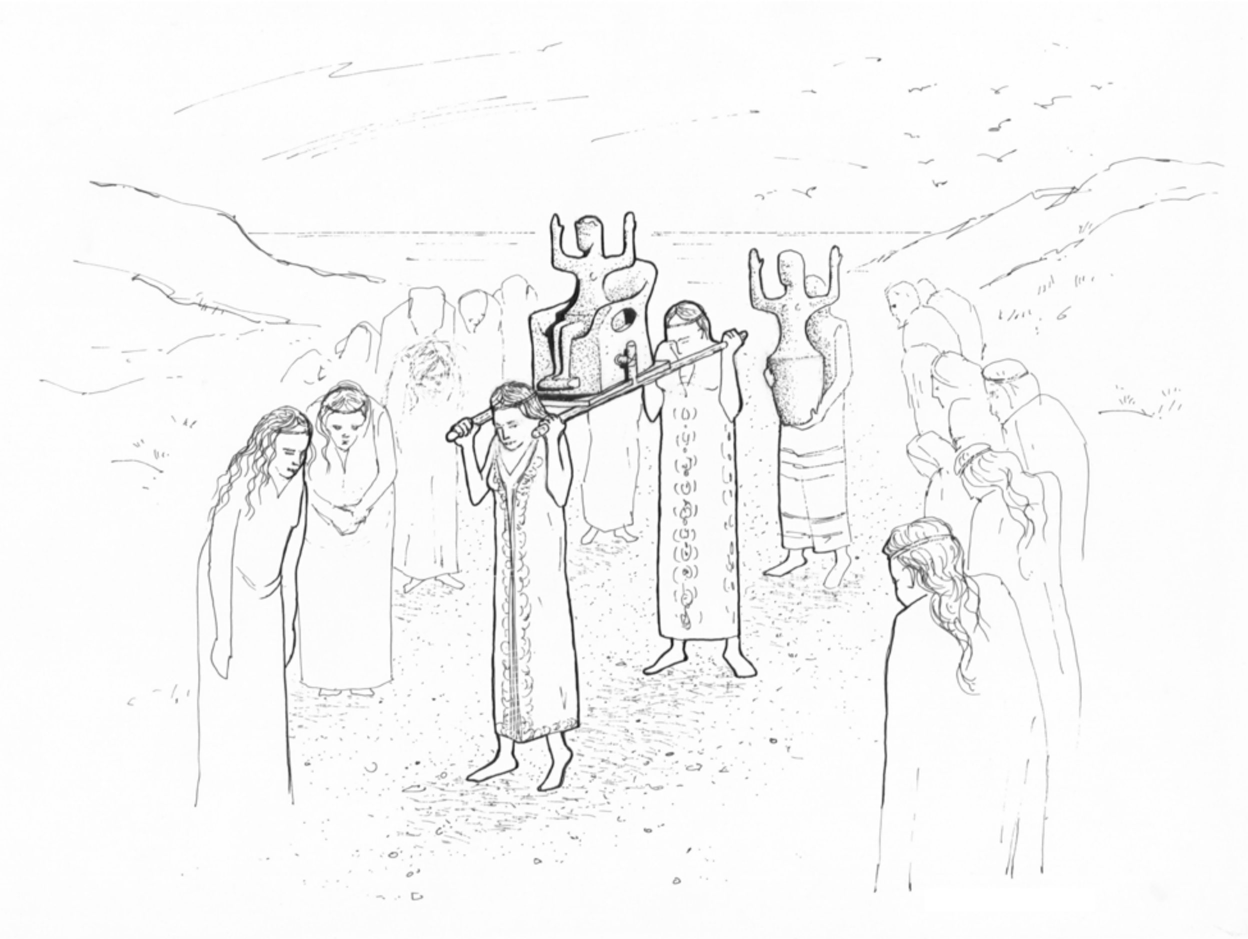

Figure 5. Artist's impression of a Cretan Dark Age procession: Kephala Vasilikis Goddess no. 1 is fastened on a wooden platform, which is carried on poles. Drawing by D. Koukoulas.

thrones, and in this way be enthroned. As far as this idea is concerned, it should be noted that so far none of the regular standing MGUAs have a cylindrical skirt with lateral holes. Of course, however, there is more than one method of fastening an idol to a throne.

The conclusion eventually reached, is that the Kephala Vasilikis Goddess no. 1 was, therefore, in a sense both seated and standing. This opens up a fascinating experimental approach to understanding some elements of primitive idols of historical times, like the Athena Polias of the Athenian Acropolis, fashioned from olive wood and fallen from heaven, where ancient testimonies differ as to whether she sat or stood (Kroll 1982). There is a theory that reconciles and explains away the conflicting opinions on the posture of the xoanon: a small, primitive plank-shaped statue, was placed on the throne and clothed with garments; the idea of a seated deity sprang from this (Hiller 1976: 36, n. 93; Alroth 1989: 52, 54 accepted and elaborated on it). That this is not merely a fanciful hypothesis but rather actual practice in classical antiquity is documented *inter alia* by a 5th century BC tetradrachm of Thracian Ainos (Figure 6; Franke and Hirmer 1964: pl. 136, top right) which depicts a small statue, possibly of Hermes Perpheraios, standing or mounted on a throne with back-rest and hand-rests. It probably illustrates a cult practice in which the standing statue is temporarily

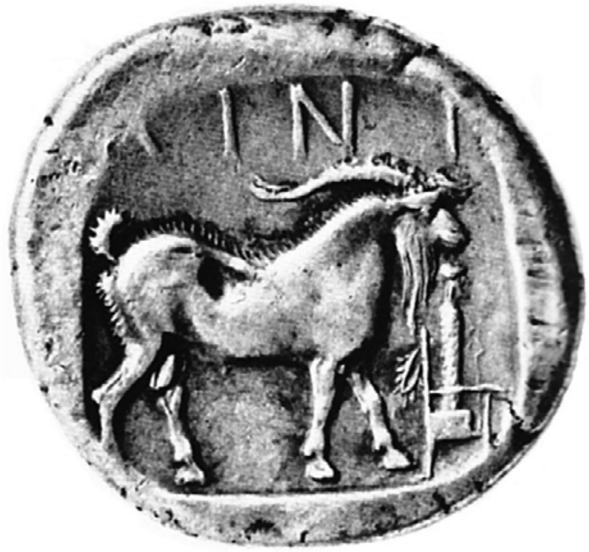

Figure 6. Silver tetradrachm of Thracian Ainos. Hermes Perpheraios (?) placed on a throne. After Franke and Hirmer 1964: pl. 136 top right.

placed upright on a throne. According to the ancient *Diegesis* on the seventh *iambos* of Kallimachos, this Hermes is the work of the carpenter Epeios, a wooden statue earlier than the Trojan horse (Acosta-Hughes 2002: 296-300, and cf. recently Petrovic 2010: 209-210). It is carried away by the river Scamander, and therefore belongs to a number of statues that vanish, then suffer mistreatment at the hands of their first random recoverers -this particular one was found at sea- then carried around in an air of uncertainty for a while before finally being carried into the city in a festive atmosphere. It is a tale not dissimilar to many concerning the adventures of Holy Icons of Christianity. The Theotokos of Kursk mentioned above was found in 1295 in a forest, among tree roots, hence 'The Kursk Root Icon'. It has been thought (Acosta-Hughes 2002: 298) that the *Diegesis* offers the etymology of the byname Perpheraios: each of the fishermen who found it, passed the image on to another. It must be noted that this is based on a conjectural reading πε*[ριφέρω]* ν. Perhaps it was a folk etymology. The period of the wanderings of this statue may be better understood as a mythical expression of a ceremonial procession. The inorganic relationship of the throne to the standing statue placed upon it was assumed by Cook (1965: 893-894) not only for the Hermes Perpheraios but also for the statue of Apollo Pythaeus or Thornakios in Thornax in Laconia (for a more detailed analysis of the themes concerning these idols, including the Amyklaian Apollo, see Eliopoulos 2011: chapter 7.9).

The remark of Tertullian (*Apol.* XVI.6) in later antiquity that 'Pallas Attica', obviously Athena Polias, and 'Ceres Pharia' were even plainer in shape than the Christian cross, being in a sense part of a cross, a mere *rudis palus*, has been noted in an effort to understand the form of Athena Polias as a simple plank (Kroll 1982: 73-74; Donohue 1988: 220, 448-449). Less well-known is the immediately succeeding phrase, where Tertullian (*Apol.* XVI.7-8) continues his comparison of pagan idols to crosses: *diximus origines deorum vestrorum a plastis de cruce induci*. The cruciform shape, to which the form of primitive idols generally and uniformly tends (cf. Lembessi 2002: 68), brings even unwillingly to one's mind some members of the MGUA family with forearms pronounced horizontally, prominent among which is the idol from Sakhtouria. Even more reluctantly, one is reminded of the Byzantine iconography of the all-encompassing Platytéra, the Virgin Mary, 'whose womb was wider than the extent of heaven' (*EvBarth* 4.17.3), since it carried Jesus Christ. The concept of wideness had already appeared in antiquity in the name of the nymph Plataia ('the wide one'), bride of Zeus at the city of Plataiai during the ceremony of the Daidala. Her name has been connected to a Vedic word with the same meaning, denoting the Earth-goddess, wife of *dyaus píta* (Burkert 1979: 133; Donohue 1988: 137-138).

To recapitulate: the new data from recent excavations have greatly enhanced our understanding of the MGUA type. The crucial deduction is that it lay at the core of the organization of the Dark Age Cretan shrines, as the main pictorial expression of the cult carried out therein. Precise excavation data, absent until the 1980s, connect the MGUAs indissolubly with bench shrines located in independent or semi- independent buildings, the first real early temples in Greece. The proliferation of these idols at peripheral settlements exactly at the moment of the fall of the central palatial administration points towards a sociological explanation. At first it gives the impression of the surfacing of more popular religious elements. Caution however is needed both here and regarding the tendency to dismiss the identification of MGUAs as deities; we would then be confronted with the paradox that the cult buildings housing them were full of human imagery but were lacking divine images. What is more important is that a concrete religious development in the 12th century BC is apparently emerging, which must be considered the precursor of the structure of Greek religion of the historical period, albeit preserving in the MGUAs iconographical motifs of the 2nd millennium BC. The Kephala Vasilikis enthroned idol, as yet a *unicum* in terms of its size, prompts special questions and hints at the surprises that lie in the future excavation of more Dark Age Cretan settlements, dozens of which have been located.

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Re-positioning ‘rural’ sanctuaries within the Cypro-Archaic societies: some considerations

Anastasia Leriou

‘Reconstructing’ religious activity in the Cypro-Archaic kingdoms

As religious beliefs are closely associated with several aspects of human existence, cults and rituals constitute an ideal field for the development, consolidation and demonstration of identities, cultural and/or otherwise. Although this observation has constituted an established piece of knowledge for both archaeologists and social anthropologists for several decades now, Cypro-Archaic (CA) cult contexts have yet to be examined through this analytical lens. This research void becomes more apparent, when one considers that the societies of Archaic Cyprus are generally thought to have included more than one distinctive cultural group, as a result of the settlement of Aegean peoples during the 12th and 11th centuries, as well as the establishment of the Phoenicians along the island’s southern coast in the 9th century, if not earlier (Iacovou 2014a; Karageorghis 2002: 115-116, 144-149; Reyes 1994: 11-22; Satraki 2012: 190-194). Moreover, the successive occupation of the island by the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Persians during the Archaic period, must have had created an atmosphere of conflict, as well as the need of the occupied, and maybe also of their overlords, to emphasize their cultural differentiation by means of stressing certain aspects of their identity (Iacovou 2014b: 805-806; Karageorghis 2002: 151-157; Reyes 1994: 49-97; Satraki 2012: 211-218). The present paper aims at initiating a discussion regarding the role that cult contexts can play in the systematic investigation of the processes controlling the establishment and expression of cultural identity in the multicultural CA societies. It is within this framework that one should attempt to sketch out the multiple threads connecting central authority and administration with religious beliefs and practices, thus effectively introducing the dichotomy between popular and official religion, an element that allegedly characterized Eastern Mediterranean cultures throughout antiquity, to the discussion. After all, besides its multicultural atmosphere, Archaic Cyprus was characterised by the presence of several foci of consolidated administrative power, as the island had been divided into several autonomous political entities generally known as the ‘Cypriot kingdoms’ (Reyes 1994: 23-26; Satraki 2012).

Most researchers associate the establishment of the kingdoms with the advent of the Aegean peoples around the end of the Late Bronze Age, a fact supposedly reflected in a series of foundation legends about certain Achaean heroes, who, on their way home after the end of the Trojan war, landed on Cyprus and ‘colonised’ it (Gjerstad 1944). However, the chronology of the kingdoms’ establishment remains, essentially, a subject of academic controversy. This is mainly due to its direct association with the problematic ‘Hellenisation of Cyprus’ narrative, as well as the fact that the earliest actual reference to the kingdoms dates from as late as 709 BC (Knapp 2008: 290-297; Leriou 2007: 574-575; Satraki 2012: 190-194). This is when the Assyrian king Sargon II erected a stele commemorating how the seven kings of Iadnana (Cyprus), after hearing about his deeds in Chaldaea and the land of Hatti, paid homage to him and kissed his feet (Iacovou 2002: 82-83; 2014b: 805-806; Reyes 1994: 50-56; Sartraki 2012: 212-214). Consequently, the present discussion will be confined to the evidence from the 7th and 6th centuries, as it is from this period onwards that the Cypriot kingdoms can be considered beyond any doubt as solidly established and highly interactive politico-economic institutions. Indeed, both written sources and the archaeological evidence demonstrate that the kingdoms’ total number was not fixed throughout the course of the Archaic period, as some of them would have been fully or partly incorporated by others, while more urban (royal) centres would develop with time (Iacovou 2002: 80-83; Satraki 2012: 211-216). This fluidity, in combination with the fact that the size of the territory ascribed to each kingdom would vary due to geographical and economic reasons, namely the presence of copper mines, harbours and ample natural resources (arable land, pastures, forests, springs and rivers etc.), does not allow an accurate reconstruction of the kingdoms’ boundaries (Iacovou 2007: 18-19; Rupp 1987; Satraki 2012: 333-340). However, the available evidence suggests that each kingdom included, besides a rural territory, where its resources were to be found, a central fortified city, i.e. its capital-administrative centre, as well as several villages scattered throughout its countryside (Fourrier 2002; 2007: 121-124).

The numerous CA cult areas that have been excavated so far are located all over the island, in both rural and urban environments. Ulbrich, in her major study on the sanctuaries and cults of the CA and Cypro-Classical (CC) periods, has distinguished four sanctuary types on the basis of their topographical association with the kingdoms’ capitals: a. urban (within the kingdom’s capital city walls), b. suburban (just outside the city's walls), c. peri-urban (within a radius of 2-6 km from the city) and d. rural/extra-urban (Ulbrich 2008: 199-250). Despite the intermediate peri-urban stage, the distinction between urban and rural sanctuaries is drastic enough to suggest possible differentiations in the groups of people using them, as well as the rituals taking place within them. This is particularly so in the case of open-air rural sanctuaries, a type of Late Bronze Age (LBA) 'ancestry' that was particularly common among the CA cult areas (Papantoniou 2013: 37; Wright 1992a), where, as the omnipresent element of nature suggests, rituals and other activities associated with popular religion (Nilsson 1979: 3-38) might have been taking place. The latter, while studied by archaeologists, social anthropologists and historians, researching the cultures of the Eastern Mediterranean during antiquity, may be defined only through its opposition to official religion, i.e. all those religious beliefs and practices generated and/or regulated and maintained by a central authority (Hägg 1981, 36; Marakas 2010: 86-88, 90; Pirenne-Delforge 2008). As the most important foci of popular religious activity seem to have been the countryside and the household area (Boden and Olyan 2008; Hägg 1981: 38-39; Nilsson 1979), a systematic comparison between rural sanctuaries and their urban counterparts is expected to cast some light on whether and, if so, to what extent, was cultural identity negotiation within the former associated with state power; moreover, the role, if any, of folk cults practiced by the members of rural societies within the vicinity of the CA countryside sanctuaries, is also to be further illuminated. Elaborating on this issue will contribute to the on-going discussion concerning the function of rural sanctuaries as territorial markers emphasising, as well as legitimising the kingdoms' domination, while boosting local social identities as parts of wider political formations (Fourrier 2002; 2007: 121-124; Iacovou 2014b: 809-810; Papantoniou 2012: 86-116; 2013: 38-41; Satraki 2012: 349-355; Ulbrich 2008: 251-252). Based on the above, the present paper's objective is essentially to initiate a discussion on the role of CA cult activity in the processes of identity construction, maintenance and demonstration as evidenced through the bipolar lenses of urban-rural and folk (popular)-official, with particular emphasis on the areas, where these categories overlap. The first and most essential step towards this is undertaking a thoroughly comparative analysis of contexts from rural and urban cult areas aiming at: a. the location of ritual differentiation instances and b. identifying whether these instances, if any, can be attributed to the cult's association with central authority or some sort of folk ritual activity.

Research trends and omissions

The effective 'reconstruction' of CA ritual activity, urban or rural, can be achieved only through the contextual analysis of the archaeological evidence (Boden and Olyan 2008: 2-4; Malone, Barrowclough and Stoddart 2007: 2-3); consequently, the initiation of the discussion proposed above may be hindered by the current state of research, which is characterised by limited amount of fully published evidence, as well as the disproportionate focus on stylistic appreciation and chronological classification of the actual finds. As the best represented class of archaeological material are the votive offerings in the shape of stone or terracotta statues and figurines, several related studies have appeared, especially after 1930, when the members of the legendary Swedish Cyprus Expeditions uncovered more than 2000 such items at the open-air sanctuary of Agia Irini (Gjerstad 1980: 106-118; Karageorghis 2002: 184-187, 191-192). Since then, research has concentrated on the following subjects (See also *Styppax, an academic resource for the study of Cypriot sculpture*, viewed 02 February 2018, http://people.uwm.edu/dbc/):

a. the morphological development and stylistic trends, and the consequent establishment of a relative chronological framework for CA sculpture; in addition, the identification of local workshops and regional styles (Counts 2001: 147-152, 168-170; Karageorghis 2002: 183-191; Papantoniou 2012: 25-27).
b. 'foreign' affinities in forms and manufacture techniques that illustrate cultural contacts, as well as political associations, thus enhancing our knowledge of the island's history during the period in question (Counts 2001: 141-152; Karageorghis 2002: 183-191; Tatton-Brown 1991: 77-81).
c. the identity of the depicted figures, as some of them have been recognised as deities, thus allowing plenty of space for the discussion of cultural contact and transmission, particularly in the cases of 'imported' gods, namely those originating from the Aegean, Egypt and Phoenicia. These discussions have often been expanded to include the identification of the deities worshipped in the sanctuaries, where specific statues and/or figurines have been found (Counts 2001: 163-165; Senf 2005; Tatton-Brown 1997: 63-68; Ulbrich 2012).
d. the symbolic value of the statues and figurines in the sanctuary contexts and consequently the negotiation of political and social power within the CA cult areas. Since several figures have been identified as worshippers or votaries, religious activities have been associated with particular social and/or ethnic groups, as well as the representatives of central authority and power (Counts 2001: 157-166; Iacovou 2014: 809-810; Leriou 2017: 525; Reyes 1994: 36-38; Sartraki 2012: 56, 360-373; Senf 2005).

Identifying the deity or deities that were worshipped in each sanctuary has been a major issue from as early as the last quarter of the 19th century, when, among many others, the German amateur archaeologist Max Ohnefalsch-Richter was conducting excavations all over Cyprus (Ohnefalsch-Richter 1893; Goring 1988: 18-22). In his comprehensive monograph entitled *Kypros, die Bibel und Homer* (1893), while discussing the 42 cult areas he excavated himself, together with the 30 sanctuaries that had been unearthed by that time by other archaeologists, Ohnefalsch-Richter effectively introduced the 'archaeology of cult' in the context of ancient Cyprus. Besides the documentation and categorisation of his finds (although he never published detailed and complete excavation reports), the excavator went as far as comparing the material from all 72 sanctuary sites and observing patterns in architecture, spatial organisation of sanctuaries, votive practice and sacred iconography (Papantoniou 2012: 24; Ulbrich 2001: 98-101), thus setting the stage for the developments in the research of CA sanctuaries outlined above.

Some 55 years later, the study of ancient Cypriot religion and cults was taken several steps forward by the Swedish archaeologist Einar Gjerstad, leader of the renowned Swedish Cyprus Expedition, the members of which excavated, among others, several Iron Age sanctuary-sites all over the island (Papantoniou 2012: 25-26). Besides his major contribution in the study of Cypriot sculpture (Gjerstad 1948: 91-125), Gjerstad, through a comparative examination of the archaeological evidence, produced a thorough typological framework for the architectural development of Cypriot sanctuaries, from the CG period down to the Roman era (Gjerstad 1948: 1-23), thus initiating a long line of research focusing on architectural typology during particular time periods or throughout the course of antiquity (Al-Radi 1983: 64-100; Bennett 1980: 629-634; Dikaios 1960; Reyes 1994: 28-32; Webb 1999: 157-165; Wright 1992a; 1992b: 255-273).

During the past decades, research has also included the topography of the sanctuaries in association with the Cypriot kingdoms' spheres of political influence through a diachronic approach towards the available material, as most CA cult areas were continuously used until the Hellenistic era, if not later, whereas many of them had been established from as early as the CG period (Satraki 2012: 349-355). Typical example of this academic trend is the work of Sabine Fourrier, who attempted to delineate the political, as well as the cultural boundaries of the Cypriot kingdoms through the identification of regional coroplastic trends, most of which are documented in sanctuary-sites contexts (Fourrier 2002; 2007; Satraki 2012: 56); moreover, Giorgos Papantoniou has tried to 'recreate' the sacred landscapes of ancient Cyprus based on the archaeological evidence, and then integrate them effectively in the cultural, social and political history of the Cypriot communities with particular emphasis on the fundamental transition from the division in individual political entities (kingdoms) to a broader political-economic context that included the entire island during the Hellenistic period (Papantoniou 2012; 2013).

Tracing ritual: the available evidence

Despite the significant advances in research outlined above, the ritual activities and ceremonial deeds that were performed within the CA sanctuaries remain obscure. Besides the almost total lack of information from ancient written sources and researchers' tendency to focus only on particular categories of the archaeological record and refrain from adopting a more holistic approach, this should also be attributed to the great difficulties inherent in the task of tracing religious rituals in the archaeological record (Brück 2007: 283-284; Kyriakidis 2007a; Rowan 2012). Defining ritual is also problematic, due to its complicated and often elusive nature (Brück 2007: 282-283; Insoll 2004: 10-13; Kyriakidis 2007b: 289-294). Whether inseparably associating ritual with religious beliefs and cult practice or not, all definitions describe it as a ceremony involving actions performed according to a set order (Averett 2011: 134-135; Marakas 2010: 108-109). In a relatively recent volume on the multifaceted associations between archaeology and ritual, Kyriakidis (2007b: 294) defined the latter as an 'etic category that refers to set activities with a special (not normal) intention-in-action, and which are specific to a group of people'. Rituals are all about a set series of actions embedded in thick contexts of meaning and symbolism (Insoll 2004: 12) and archaeologists, while perusing the material record, need to identify instances of special (not normal) activities that have been established/crystallized through time (continuity), thus gaining symbolic value (Kyriakidis 2007b: 296-298). As the identification of deviations from the norm requires the solid knowledge of the norm itself, a contextual analysis of the archaeological record is called for; moreover, in order to trace crystallization of deviant activity, one needs a diachronic approach (Leriou 2017: 525-526).

The fact that these theoretical considerations are yet to be applied in the archaeological record of CA sanctuaries should be attributed to the lack of fully published cult contexts, the general scarcity of architectural remains and complete archaeological contexts, and of course the general conservatism that has characterised Cypriot archaeology, particularly as far as the Iron Age is concerned (Knapp and Antoniadou 1998: 30-32). The extremely limited discussions of ritual activity in CA sanctuaries are based almost solely on iconography, namely that of small-scale terracotta figurines (Bennett

1980: 634-635, 644-645; Karageorghis 1995: 36, 38, 40, 56, 132; 2002: 191-192; Reyes 1994: 34). In contrast to the large- and medium-scale sculpture in stone and terracotta, all types of which are standing, quite static figures depicting gods, votaries from a wide variety of social classes and priests/god-attendants (Karageorghis 1993), clay figurines feature a wider thematic repertory including more complicated scenes (Karageorghis 1995; 1996; 1998; 1999; 2006: 115-208). As far as ritualistic actions are concerned, the most widely accepted categories are those associated with figurines generally identified as 'priests' and worshippers. The former includes figurines of male (?) figures wearing zoomorphic masks, thus hinting towards ceremonies associated with Late Bronze Age Cypriot traditions, as the ritualistic use of bucrania as masks may be as early as the LCIII period, if not earlier; this hypothesis is being corroborated by the presence of clay masks, mostly of bulls, in CA sanctuaries (Averett 2011: 141-142; 2015; Karageorghis 1995: 54-57; 2006: 159-161; Leriou 2017: 531-533). The worshippers, on the other hand, male or female, are usually represented praying, holding offerings or musical instruments, e.g. tambourines, lyres and flutes (Karageorghis 1995: 36-54; 1998: 27, 30-33, 37-44, 67-77; 1999: 151-212, 221-243; 2006: 124-127, 144-149; Leriou 2017: 529-535; Meerschaert 1991) or as parts of a more complex scene depicting a ring dance, sometimes around a tree (Karageorghis 1995: 132-137; 2006: 149-152, 156-159; Leriou 2017: 528-529), thus suggesting ceremonial dancing and music playing (Karageorghis 2012).

Although the examples presented above are based on figurines, many of which are of unknown provenance or originating from burial contexts, they do illustrate the necessity to re-address the CA coroplastic evidence under the light of the ideas projected in the first part of this paper. In other words, we need to re-assess the symbolic value of these terracotta categories, and most possibly others, by re-positioning them in their original contexts; subsequently, a comparative analysis of the evidence from urban and rural contexts is expected to highlight possible instances of cultural identity establishment and/or differentiation. Unfortunately, the majority of small-scale terracotta figurines excavated in cult-places remains largely unpublished and undertaking a major study aiming at the reconstruction of CA religious rituals based on this class of archaeological material cannot yet be undertaken. Nevertheless, the central position that terracotta figurines, inexpensive, mass-produced items that could be obtained by anyone, can occupy in the research of CA ritual activity should be stressed and investigated further in future research; this is also the case for their role in the processes of identity consolidation and projection within the physical and ideological limits of cult areas (Leriou 2017: 526-528).

The sacred dances, musical performances and whatever other activities the CA religious rituals were involving, must had been usually taking place outdoors and were most probably open to many people, as suggested by the architecture of the relevant cult areas. A brief examination of the latter suggests that, with only a few exceptions (Gjerstad 1948: 19-23; Reyes 1994: 30; Wright 1992b: 265-266), the basic condition for the existence of organised cult activity appears to had been the presence of an open, court-like space (temenos), either fenced or unenclosed (Al-Radi 1983: 97-98; Bennett 1980: 631-633; Gjerstad 1948: 17-19; Karageorghis 2002: 191-192; Reyes 1994: 29-30; Wright 1992b: 265-266). The fact that this applies to both sanctuaries located within or close to urban centres and their rural counterparts suggests ritualistic analogies, as these large open spaces, possibly filled with trees and other vegetation in a grove-like fashion, could have had accommodated a large variety of ceremonial deeds.

Out of the 170 CA sanctuary-sites, that are currently known through excavation and/or survey and featured in Ulbrich's comprehensive list (Papantoniou 2013: 34-35; Ulbrich 2008: 481-495), only 80 examples have yielded archaeological remains that could be associated with a cult area, whereas the remaining 90 are 'favissae', i.e. 'repositories of accumulated votive offerings when these have overrun the humble bounds of the offering place' (Wright 1992: 264); about 40 favissae have been identified in urban and peri-urban environments, whereas the remaining 50 were located in the countryside. Moreover, only 47 sanctuary-sites have yielded actual architectural evidence, with 24 examples in urban/peri-urban locations and 23 in rural areas. The open spaces mentioned above were commonly defined by periboloi. As far as the 33 instances, where no enclosure wall has been preserved, one can assume that the latter had either never existed or had been constructed with perishable materials. The fact that more examples of precinct walls have survived in association with rural sanctuaries (10 rural: 4 urban), should probably be attributed to space availability. An element of great significance that should be further investigated is the height of these precinct walls, as low periboloi would suggest ritualistic activity of a more open/common character, as opposed to the exclusiveness that tall walls would signify. The only CA sanctuaries that have yielded no evidence for the presence of an open space are those at the site of Agios Iakovos-Dima, in the Salaminian kingdom's territory (Al-Radi 1983: 69-70; Ulbrich 2008: 437-438) and the various cult areas associated with palatial complexes such as those at Amathus and Vouni (Ulbrich 2008: 272-274, 462-465).

Both urban and rural sanctuaries are characterised by the frequent presence of altars (5 rural: 9 urban), always important foci of ritualistic activity and one of Gjerstad's fundamental criteria for recognising a sanctuary site (Gjerstad 1948: 1; Wright 1992b: 269-270), and small rectangular roofed structures with one or, less frequently, two rooms. Although the available architectural remains are too limited to allow their remodelling, these rooms have been reconstructed on the basis of CA terracotta models of cult-structures found in Amathus, Idalion, Golgoi, Kition and Trikomo as simple rectangular buildings with a pitched roof, a rectangular doorway and sometimes a frontal porch with columns in antis (Karageorghis 1996: 56-57; Reyes 1994: 29-30). However, there had been more elaborate architectural examples, sometimes referred to in bibliography as 'temples', such as those at Tamassos (Gjerstad 1948: 23; Ulbrich 2008: 470-472), although nothing that could be identified with a cult statue has been found in these buildings. The function of the roofed structures found in association with CA cult areas is not particularly clear, whereas no attempt to produce a contextual analysis of the related finds has ever been made; they could had been auxiliary spaces (priests' houses, storerooms etc.), areas reserved for special rituals, while it is quite possible that these rooms served more than one purpose, most probably varying through time and/or from region to region. Nevertheless, elements such as the elaborate architectural form of some of them, as well as the terracotta models depicting rectangular rooms with a human figure or a sphinx in their interiors (Karageorghis 1996: 57-67) associate these structures, at least in some cases, with cult practice and ritualistic activity. Furthermore, the model of a roofed structure attached to an open space appears to reproduce Late Bronze Age prototypes of Cypriot sacral architecture, which must had survived through the CG period, as the minimal available evidence suggests (Wright 1992a). The preservation of this traditional layout becomes much more meaningful when one considers that it survived well into the Hellenistic era throughout the island, whereas, oddly enough, no Greek style temple was ever erected in Cyprus, even after its incorporation into the Ptolemaic kingdom and, consequently, the Greek world (Bennett 1980: 631-634; Wright 1992b: 266-267). Apparently, what we are dealing with here is a 'crystalized' pancyprian trend, untouched by any attempt, organised or spontaneous, to manipulate collective memory, in order to serve political, economic or other purposes. CA sanctuaries in urban contexts (wherever architectural remains have survived) have produced 15 examples of roofed structures within the sacred precinct area, whereas their rural counterparts 16.

Conclusive remarks – suggestions for future research

The common threads going through rural and urban CA sanctuary contexts with regards to architectural elements of possible ritualistic function are discernible in other classes of finds, namely the various types of offerings that the votaries would bring in and place somewhere within the limits of the cult areas, items of significant social, symbolic and emotional value including stone and terracotta statues and figurines, pottery, jewellery, weapons, bronze objects etc. Moreover, despite their remote location in the countryside, many rural sanctuaries, such as those at Achna, Agia Irini, Voni, Limassol-Komissatiato, Malloura, Arsos, Lefkoniko, Frangissa, Meniko-Litharkes etc. (Karageorghis 2002: 191-193), have been associated with central authority, as a result of their elaborate architecture and, most importantly, the typology of remarkably large amounts of votive offerings. This is particularly so for the impressive terracotta or stone sculptures excavated in both urban and rural cult areas and generally thought to had represented blatant demonstrations of social, economic and political power, thus closely associating countryside cult activity with 'official' cults and religious beliefs (Satraki 2012: 360-373). Apart from the large rural sanctuaries mentioned above, several smaller ones have been identified throughout the Cypriot countryside. As they are characterised by analogous architecture, yet of relatively lower quality, and fewer, although of similar typology, offerings, it can be argued that these sanctuaries were cared for and operated by local communities, whose resources were probably more limited. Nevertheless, these communities were essentially parts of wider political formations, i.e. the kingdoms, and as such were most probably actively included in the ideological framework of official religious practices. At the same time, however, the fact that no cult areas clearly associated with folk rituals have so far been identified, could suggest that the latter might had also taken place in these smaller rural sanctuaries, since their larger counterparts were systematically employed in state power consolidation and display. However, the apparent absence of any archaeological evidence associated with such rituals, perhaps attributable to its flimsy nature or the incomplete state of research, does imply a rather close attachment to the so-called 'official cults'.

Regardless of the above considerations, the remarkably homogeneous picture emerging from the study of CA open-air sanctuary contexts throughout the island is suggestive of uniformity with regards to religious activities and beliefs, as well as coinciding cultural identities. Given the political fragmentation of Archaic Cyprus, the island-wide identification of common cultural characteristics seems more remarkable and should most probably be associated with the memory of a shared past/origin, the impact of which on the formation and maintenance of cultural identities was much stronger than that of regional authority. In this respect, it is essential to re-examine the connection between CA open-air sanctuaries and their LBA 'predecessors', in an attempt to identify possible ritual trends extending from the Late Bronze Age to the CA period. Furthermore, the several characteristics that appear in both rural and urban cult areas, reinforce the hypothesis of ritual homogeneity proposed above;

the emerging picture is quite peaceful, essentially a situation lacking antagonistic cultural elements among the members of CA societies and analogous to the one observed during the Early Iron Age, after the arrival of peoples from the Aegean (Leriou 2007: 572-579). Moreover, the frequent, forcefully imposed presence of foreign elements as a result of the island's successive occupation by the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Persians must had been quite threatening to the local populations and, thus, provided a powerful stimulus for consciously demonstrating common cultural identity (Leriou 2007: 578).

Before closing, however, it should be stressed that this picture of homogeneity and probable association to official cult practices cannot be considered valid before it is corroborated by the more or less detailed reconstruction of ritualistic activities that took place within the cult areas in question. Although the brief presentation of the possible elements of symbolic value and ritualistic function in these contexts suggests that there was not much differentiation between rural and urban cult practices (or between cult practices taking place in large, state-sponsored countryside sanctuaries and those in their more modest counterparts), the archaeological evidence needs to be re-examined contextually and on a diachronic basis, in order to identify cases of special actions performed according to a set order that have been crystallised through time. However, before turning to other categories of archaeological material, in order to identify CA popular religious rites and beliefs, namely domestic and burial contexts, should the research proposed above fail to produce sound evidence for a clear differentiation between rural and urban ritualistic activity, one should consider just how distinctive are the boundaries between the so-called 'official' religious beliefs and cultural practices and their popular/folk counterparts. After all, this is merely a 'technical' distinction devised by researchers to facilitate the effective comprehension of these ideas and, most importantly, their application in cases studies.

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Popular religion in ancient Judah during the 8th and 7th centuries BC. The case of the female pillar figurines

Valia Papanastasopoulou

Introduction

When one decides to study the subject of ancient Israel and Judah's popular religion, one should begin by trying to provide a definition of what popular Israelite religion is. The main reason for this focuses on the meaning of the term *popular religion*. There is a tendency in biblical studies to describe popular religion as the religion of the great masses, namely the uneducated, members of the lower-class, peasants, *i.e.* the simple people (Ackerman 1992: 1). In our attempt to give an answer to the question: 'what is popular or folk religion in ancient Judah?', it would perhaps be more appropriate to define what popular religion is not.

Popular religion in ancient Israel is not identified with the 'one and only' religion presented as the norm in the text of the Hebrew Bible. The popular religion practised by the people is condemned by the representatives of the official Israelite religion, i.e. the Deuteronomistic Historians, the priests and the prophets of the state of Judah. These are the three groups that produced most of the biblical texts and formed the direction of Israelite monotheistic religion. Therefore, popular religion in Judah is something that is characterized as heterodox or heretical (Rose 1975: 213-251; Ackerman 1992: 1; Dever 2001: 196). The rule is that every cult or manifestation not following the path of the Hebrew Bible is condemned. Within this context, we will try to discuss one aspect of the popular religion of monarchic Judah in the 8th and 7th centuries BC. We will present the so-called Judean Pillar Figurines (JPFs) and attempt to examine the relationship of those figurines with popular religion, as well as their use and function in the religious life of the ancient Jews during this period.

Typology of the JPFs

Since the late nineteenth century, thousands of figurines have been discovered in the land of modern Israel, and more specifically, in the ancient kingdom of Judah. Separated from the northern kingdom of Israel after King Solomon's death in 930 BC, the kingdom of Judah with Jerusalem as its capital, followed a separate political course until its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Among the figurines discovered there, almost a thousand anthromorphic figurines were uncovered, mostly from the area of Jerusalem, and almost all were female: the so-called Judean Pillar Figurines (JPFs).

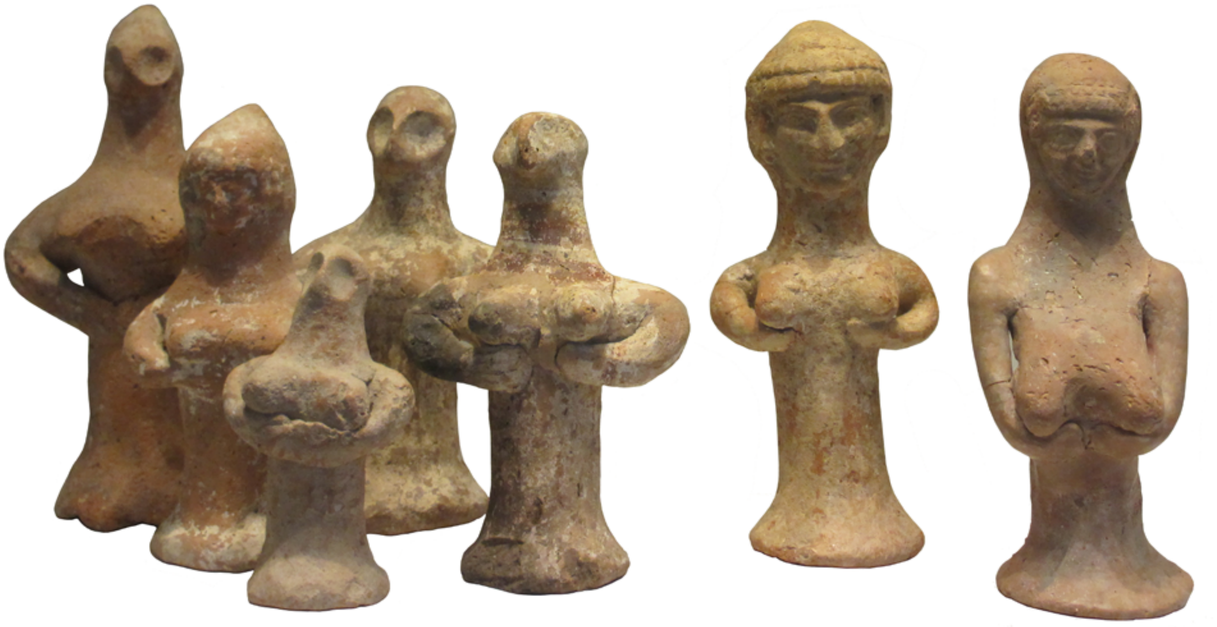

Figure 1. Judean Pillar Figurines, 8th-6th century BC; Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Most of these female figurines are of a shape and size (Figure 1). They are made of terracotta and stand on pillar bases (Kletter 1996: 30). Both the pillar bases and their bodies are handmade, and their height is ca. 0.13-0.21cm. On the upper part of their bodies, they hold their exaggerated breasts with their hands. The lower part of the figurines is a pillar base that begins from the chest area and goes down without any indication of the sex. Their heads are either handmade or moulded. The handmade heads are manufactured from the same piece of clay and the faces have a bird-like appearance. Almost one third of the JPFs belongs to this group and their size is slightly smaller, at about 0.10-0.16cm high. The second group of the figurines, those with moulded heads, makes up the other two thirds of the total. The head was made separately from the body and was attached to it by a wooden peg which was hidden inside the neck of the figurine (Kletter 1996: 29-30). The faces of the moulded heads have a round shape, a smiling mouth and large eyes (Kletter 1996: 29), and the clear facial details indicate that some of the moulds were made of metal (Moorey 2003: 203). The hair is short and curly, perhaps depicting a wig (Figure 2).

The JPFs were all originally decorated with a white slip followed by bands of assorted colours such as red, yellow, brown and black, although the decoration has survived on few of them. On rare occasions, the painting of an ornament like a necklace or a bracelet can be discerned, but there is no indication of clothing (Kletter 1996: 30). The back of the figurines, both the head and the body, has been left unfinished and unpainted, which was probably intentional since they were supposed to be viewed only from the front (Johnston 2003: 86). Finally, the absence of holes on them indicates that they were not intended to hang on walls or to be carried, making it likely that they were placed in a specific area.

Another variation of the JPFs is the figure that holds a tambourine or a dove. The bird was an emblem of the goddess Astarte throughout the ancient Near East and there may well be a connection with this deity, as we will examine later. Some few figurines were made according to Phoenician manufacturing techniques, that is with a hollow bell-shaped body (Kletter 1996: 35-36). Finally, the rarest figurines are the ones in the form of a plaque that is flat at the back and impressed by a mould on the front (Kletter 1996: 34).

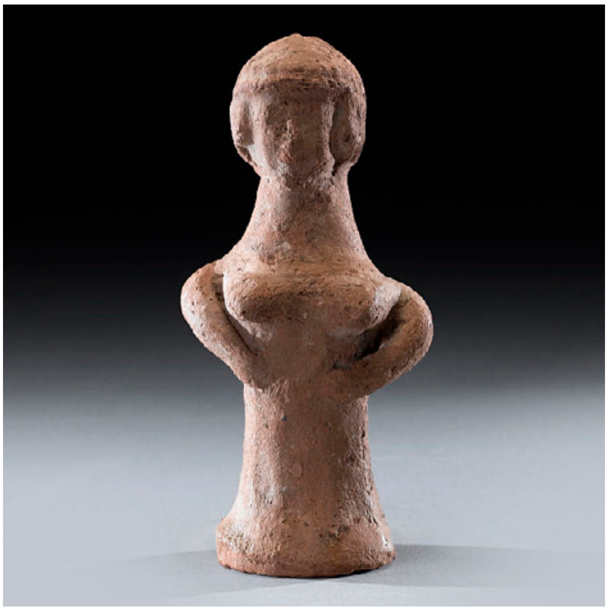

Figure 2. Judean Pillar Figurine, H. 15.5cm, 800-700 BC; Photo © The Jewish Museum, New York.

The majority of the JPFs are broken or in a fragmentary condition with few known intact samples. The reason for their fragility is the inferior quality of the clay which was fired at low temperatures (Pritchard 1961: 15; Johnston 2003: 85; Kletter 1996: 49). On the other hand, there are some scholars who interpret the damaged condition of the figurines as the result of a ritual act of worshippers or deliberate destruction by the monotheistic reformers of Judah (Barkey 1992: 362; Holland 1977: 137). This argument is based on the way the clear majority of the pillar figurines were broken and the localization of the damage on the body rather than on other more sensitive parts, such as the nose or the neck.

The ritual action of deliberate breakage is not something uncommon in the Near East (Kletter 1996: 54). However, this is most probably not the case for the JPFs as there is no evidence of deliberate breakage of the body or mutilation of the face. Furthermore, the degree of damage to the pillar figurines is the same as that to other excavated artefacts (Van Der Toorn 2002: 53). Additionally, an experiment carried out with modern figurines manufactured similarly to the JPFs and deliberately dropped from shelves, has shown that their breakage is like that of the ancient figurines (Kletter 1996: 56).

Archaeological context and date

JPFs have been discovered in many contexts such as houses, public buildings, pits and graves (Kletter 1996: 57-58). Nevertheless, there is great incertitude regarding many contexts, especially for those from the early excavations. Approximately twenty intact JPFs come from secure contexts. Out of those, twelve derive from graves, although there is no clear connection with specific burials. The other eight intact JPFs come from a variety of contexts, *i.e.* three from houses, two from a water cistern, two from silo pits and one from a public building (Kletter 1996: 57-67).

Undoubtedly, the most impressive and rich context in terms of JPFs is Cave 1 in Jerusalem, which was excavated by Dame Kathleen Kenyon. In this cave, hundreds of figurines were discovered and among them a very large number of JPFs (Kenyon 1967: 101). The place was interpreted by the excavator as a favissa, i.e. a storage place for cultic purpose with a shrine wrongly assumed to be nearby (Kenyon 1974: 141). Other scholars also support the view that it was cultic storage or disposal cave (Franken 1995; Holladay 1987). Kletter (1996: 63), however, argues that the cave functioned as a storage assemblage implying that the presence of JPFs in a large group was a result of storage rather than of cultic use.

JPFs are dated by most scholars to the late 8th century BC, i.e. during the Iron Age IIB period (Engle 1979: 21; Kletter 1996: 40; Moorey 2003: 58; Day 2000: 55; Frymer-Kensky 1992: 160) and very few can be dated to an earlier period. However, there are some scholars who suggest that JPFs appear for the first time as early as the 10th century BC (Pritchard 1943: 57). The secure samples which provide a timeline for the JPFs date suggest that they emerged in considerable numbers throughout the 8th century BC and continued in use during the 7th and the early 6th centuries BC.

After more than a century of research, the exact timeline of the JPFs is still unclear. We can be sure only about the time when the figurines disappeared. In the period after the Babylonian conquest and destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, pillar Figurines are few, and they are absent from the areas where the Jews settled upon their return from exile. Finally, during the Persian period, the JPFs are totally absent (Stern 1982: 165-176). Therefore, even though the exact date of their emergence is not clear, we can date with certainty the presence of the JPFs in the territory of Judah from the 8th until the early 6th century BC. Their disappearance is most probably connected to the end of pagan practices among the Jews after their return from the Babylonian exile.

Interpretations of the JPFs

There are some serious issues among scholars regarding the representation and use of the JPFs, the most important having to do with the significance of the figurines in the religious context of monarchic Judah. The main plausible hypotheses regarding their representation are two: firstly, that the JPFs represent a human female or secondly, that they depict a goddess. Undoubtedly, the answer to this question gives the answer to the question of their use as well.

Quite frequently, scholars make a connection with fertility and motherhood based on the JPFs' exaggerated breasts. Their decoration is very simple, and for that reason some scholars recognize the figurines as representations of human females (Meyers, 2002: 286; 1988: 162). As for their use, they suggest that these figurines played a role in ritual actions related to fecundity, motherhood, pregnancy, lactation and general aspects of the female body's functions (Byrne 2004: 139; Frymer-Kensky 1992: 160). Ziony Zevit (2001: 274) supports this view and characterises the figurines, mostly those that may represent humans, as 'prayers in clay'. He considers them to be a kind of votive offering which the worshippers offered to the deity, hoping that their prayers would be accepted. This means that the role of the figurine would be that of a representative before the god asking for divine help.

On the other hand, there are scholars who view JPFs as representations of a female deity (Engle 1979: 9; Kletter 1996: 81; Dever 2005: 58; Finkelstein et al. 2007: 177). The patriarch of biblical archaeology, William Albright (1939: 120), interpreted the JPFs as the depiction of the 'dea nutrix', i.e. the 'Mother Goddess' of the late Iron Age period. He based his claim on the material of his survey at Tell Beit Mirsim. Albright associated JPFs with goddess Astarte, who was thought by many scholars to be the principal goddess in Syria-Palestine during the Iron Age. This was the situation before the discovery of the Ugaritic texts that revealed Asherah as the main goddess of the Ugaritic pantheon. However, today, the 'Mother Goddess' theory is challenged openly by most scholars.

Another theory supported by some scholars is that the pillar figurines could be toys (Ucko 1968: 423-425; Hübner 1993: 92; Van Der Toorn 2002 52). However, Hübner did not provide any proof for his theory, offering only anthropological and historical analogies for the use of figurines as toys, something that was already presented much earlier by Ucko. This, however, could not be the case for distinct reasons: JPFs were not discovered in connection to children's tombs and there is no evidence of their use as toys (e.g. absence of smoothed parts). Moreover, they were too heavy and robust to be children's toys and their backs are crudely manufactured and undecorated, which would argue against their use in children's play (Kletter 1996: 73).

Do they represent goddess Asherah, Yahweh's consort?

A considerable number of scholars recognize in JPFs the representation of goddess Asherah (Engle 1979: 50-52; Hestrin 1987: 221-22; Kletter 1996: 80-81; Keel and Uehlinger 1992: 333-36; Dever 2005: 194). Asherah is known in west Semitic mythology as the mother goddess. She initially appears in Akkadian sources with the name Ashratum or Ashratu. The Hittites called her Asherdu or Ashertu. In general, Asherah is identified with Athirat, the Ugaritic goddess who was consort of the Ugaritic god, El, father of all gods (Hadley, 2000: 38).

The Ugaritic texts dated before 1200 BC almost always refer to Asherah by her full title *rbt 'atrt ym (rabat atirat yammi)* 'Lady of the Sea'. Another divine name of Asherah which occurs in the religious texts of Ugarit is 'qaniyatu ilhm' 'The creatrix of the Gods (Elohim)' (Hadley 2000: 39-40). In Ugaritic religion there is a clear distinction between Asherah and Astarte. However, in non-Ugaritic sources, such as the Hebrew Bible, there is a mixture of the two deities. This could be a result of religious syncretism or a simple scribal error.

In the Hebrew Bible, the term asherah occurs 40 times in the feminine and masculine form, more frequently with a definite article or suffix. Most scholars agree that asherah denotes the goddess in a number of texts (Judg. 3:7, 1; Kings 18:19, 2; Kings 21:7). These texts propose an adoration of goddess Asherah from the Judges period (12th century BC) with continuity until 7th century monarchic Judah (Hadley 2000: 63-83). However, the authenticity of the texts that associate Asherah with god Baal in the episode of Mount Carmel where Prophet Elijah confronts the prophets of the two gods, has been questioned. For some scholars, the reference of the name Asherah could be a later addition by the deuteronomistic polemic against syncretism in the Israelite religion, to connect the goddess with Baal, hence disconnecting her from Yahweh, the national god of Israel, whose consort, Asherah, was considered to be in the context of 8th century BC popular religion, as we will discuss bellow (Binger 1997: 114).

On the other hand, most of references to asherah or asherim (plural form) in the Hebrew Bible, also indicate the existence of a cultic object under this term. This object, as we are informed by the biblical text, could be made of wood, planted or driven into the ground, or erected beside an altar. It could be cut down, broken into pieces, burnt and pounded into dust. Most probably, this cultic object was a stylized sacred tree representing the goddess herself. The veneration of this cultic object was condemned by Yahwism as a sin, even though the prophetic texts of the 8th century BC or a little later do not contain that many references to this subject. The remarkable scarcity of such references shows most probably that the prophetic movement of Judah was not overly preoccupied with the condemnation of Asherah's worship.

While it was an element of idolatry and religious syncretism in Judah, it appears it was not as important as other manifestations, such as the veneration of gods Baal and Molech, or practicing divination, child sacrifice and sacred prostitution. However, this cultic object was destroyed at times of religious reform by the kings of Judah throughout the 8th and 7th centuries BC. Finally, it is worth mentioning that nothing in the Hebrew Bible explicitly connects the goddess Asherah or her cultic object with figurines such as the JPFs.

Hence, is it possible that the Judean Pillar Figurines are somehow mentioned in the Hebrew Bible by other terms? It is a fact that the Hebrew Bible in the context of its polemic against religious syncretism, frequently mentions the construction and use of cultic images made of varied materials, such as wood, stone and precious metals. Various words are used for these objects: *pesel, gillulim, siqqus, massekah, 'elil, asabbim, selem* and *teraphim.* The biblical text informs us that these images were owned by common citizens and even monarchs in some cases.

In general, none of the above terms seems to be connected specifically to figurines. Some of these terms refer to molten images, others are more generic, while some others are not so frequently used during the period of the JPFs' proliferation. It is also possible that the prophets of Judah condemned the JPFs using more vague characterizations, including them in their own preferred terms for idols. However, there is no specific reference to them.

It would also be helpful for our discussion to mention three extra-biblical texts related to the goddess Asherah or her cultic object in the context of Judah's religion in the 8th century BC. These are the Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el- Qôm inscriptions, which offer important evidence regarding religious practices and ideas in the Iron Age II period. Kuntillet 'Ajrud was a caravan station with a religious character in the desert of northern Sinai (Meshel 2012: xxi), where evidence of religious syncretism condemned by the prophets of Judah was found. The excavation of this site were conducted from 1975 to 1976 by Ze'ev Meshel, and many ancient Hebrew and Phoenician inscriptions were uncovered. Dated to the first half of the 8th century BC, the Kuntillet Ajrud Hebrew inscriptions are revealing for popular Judean religion of the period.

The inscriptions were painted on plaster walls and large storage jars or incised on stone vessels (Meshel 2012: 73). They mention the names of gods El and Yahweh, who were venerated by the Jews, as well as the names of pagan gods, such as Baal and Asherah. The travellers who stopped at the religious centre of Kuntillet Ajrud, as well as the few locals, expressed their religious beliefs through folk-art drawings and writing. Most likely, the site was a religious centre connected with the journeys of the Judean kings to Eilat, Ezion-Geber and perhaps even to southern Sinai.

The two paleo-Hebrew inscriptions relevant to Asherah or her cultic object are written on two fragmentary pithoi and are the following. A large sherd of Pithos A was discovered in the 'bench room' and depicts three anthropomorphic figures, a cow nursing a calf, and above these a blessing evoking the protection of Yahweh and his Asherah (Meshel 2012: 165-173). Some scholars have identified the sitting lyre player with Asherah, and there has been a lot of discussion over this but no final conclusion reached (Figure 3).

The text of the inscription states: 'I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria and by his Asherah' (Meshel 2012: 87). On Pithos B, which shows a procession of worshippers' (Meshel 2012: 173-177), we read (Figure 4): 'Amaryau said to my lord. ... I bless you by Yahweh of Teman and by his Asherah ... Yahweh bless you and keep you and be with you ...' (Meshel 2012: 95). The third extra-biblical text comes from the tomb site of Khirbet el-Qom near Hebron in the ancient kingdom of biblical Judah. William Dever excavated two tombs in 1967 and discovered an engraved paleo-Hebrew inscription in tomb 2 which was associated with an inscribed hand, most probably of apotropaic character. The inscription is not very clear, but in general we read (Dever 1984: 21-25*):* 'Blessed is/be Uriyahu by Yahweh my guardian and by his Asherah'*.* The inscription dating to mid-8th century BCE provides yet more evidence that the ancient Israelites believed their god Yahweh to have a consort, *i.e.* goddess Asherah.

We do not know the exact meaning of the inscriptions, but we can recognize their importance in the study of Judah's popular religion in the 8th century BC. Either a cultic object or the goddess herself, the word asherah in the Kuntillet 'Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qôm inscriptions suggests that goddess Asherah was venerated in the context of popular Judean religion, contrary to the general monotheistic state politics, and could be associated with the existence of the JPFs in Judah during the same period.

Conclusion

Thus, if JPFs represent goddess Asherah, they could have been used by her followers for her worship. They would have been placed in their homes for domestic cultic actions and could have been buried, sporadically, with their deceased owner. As we have already seen, biblical texts indicate that goddess Asherah was the prominent goddess in the monarchic Judah period. However, some kings (Asa, Hezekiah and Josiah) who reformed Israelite religion, were opposed to her veneration. On the other hand, there are occasions where the worship of Asherah intruded into the royal circles, as in the case of queen Maacah, mother of king Asa during the 10th century BC (1 Kgs 15:13 and 2 Chr. 15:16), or later in the 7th century BC, in the case of King Manasseh (2 Kgs 21:3,7). In the period of monarchy, throughout the kingdom of Judah, there were numerous locations where an unofficial popular cult was practised, namely the *high places*, called 'bamoth' in the Hebrew Bible, in addition to family cult actions practised privately at home. All these popular cult practices (e.g. the worship of Asherah, veneration of the ancestors, child sacrifices to god Molech, divination *etc.*), were in opposition to the official state cult and monotheistic Israelite religion.

Obviously, the JPFs are one aspect of this religious syncretism and popular religion in Judah. The question that then arises is, if we accept that JPFs represent

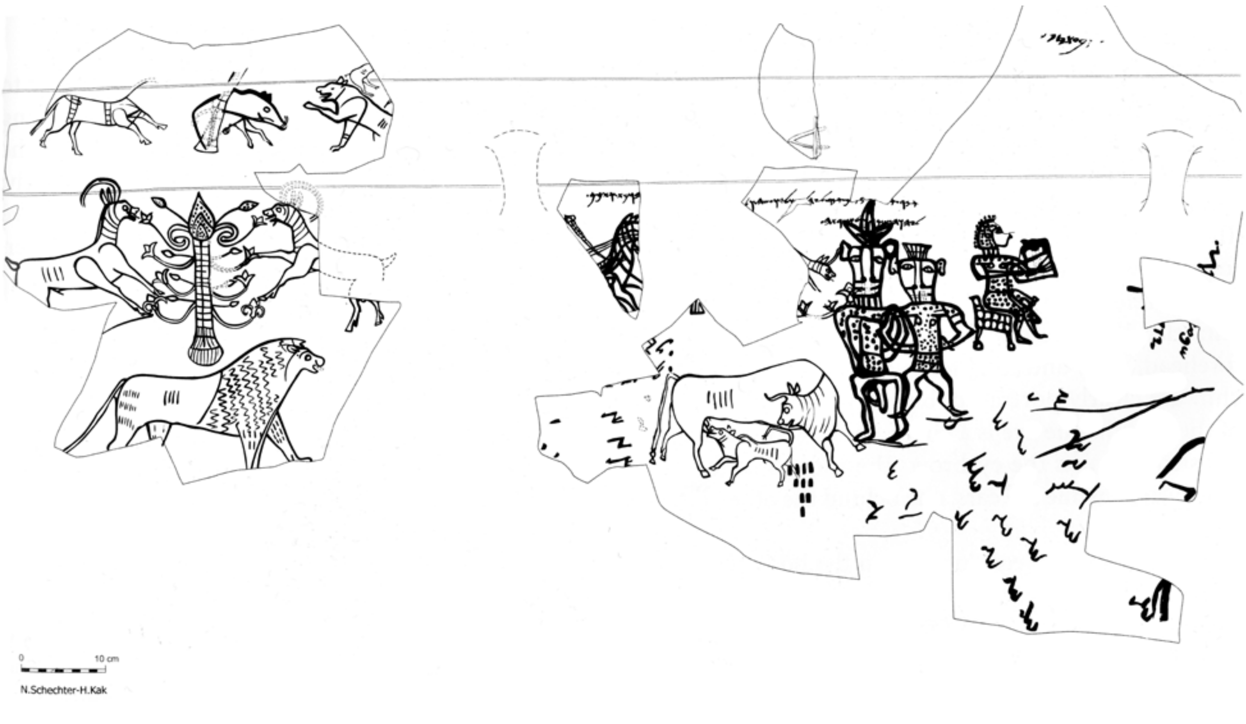

Figure 3. Pithos A. Drawings and inscription. Kuntillet Ajrud; Photo© Meshel 2012: 147.

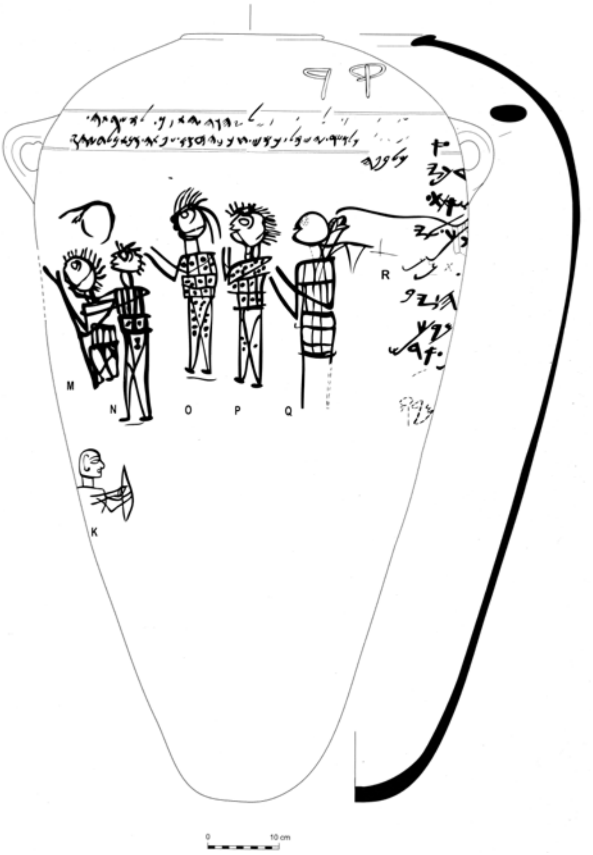

Figure 4. Pithos B. Drawings and inscription. Kuntillet Ajrud; Photo© Meshel 2012:145.

Asherah, why did they mostly appear in this period and not earlier? This remains a mystery since Asherah was worshipped in Judah before the 8th century and thus her cult symbol was venerated by Jewish people and condemned by the prophets. Neither can the political changes of this period in the kingdom of Judah, *i.e.* the Assyrian (Wilson 2012: 12-13) and subsequent Babylonian domination, offer a clear answer on this topic. The JPFs have been found in many contexts and that identifies them with a deity believed to be active in many domains, both in people's public and private lives, as well as their after-life.

Their function and use are the second issue that needs to be addressed. Most probably, they were used as an expression of the popular veneration of goddess Asherah. They were mainly used in domestic religion, probably by the women. It seems possible that they had some relation with the nurturance of infants as they appear frequently in household contexts. Also, the gender of the figurines and the exaggerated depiction of their breasts probably associate them with feminine domestic cult, although the lack of more specific evidence could not exclude a connection also with men. Figurines could have functioned as a substitute for the cultic image since they were simple in manufacture, affordable, and easily replaced if they were broken or buried. They were treated as significant objects, as we can assume by the existence of decoration on them, but not as sacred objects, because they were discarded when broken.

Their presence in the late Iron Age period shows that the pillar figurines played a notable role in the everyday life of the Judean society. Undoubtedly, Judah had known and used figurines before the Iron Age period, but the JPFs are entirely different to them in character and quantity. Neither is there any similarity between the JPFs and the figurines from the neighbouring territories of the same period, such us Transjordan, northern Israel, the coastal plain and Phoenicia. Even though the iconographic motif of a woman holding her breasts is familiar to the ancient Near East and pillar-based figurines had become common in the Levant by the late Iron Age, the JPFs are unique. They are the exclusive product of the kingdom of Judah and much simpler in style and ornamentation.

In the biblical texts we do not find any specific reference to or condemnation of the JPFs, but we can assume that they were not viewed favourably by the prophetic movement of their time. They were not theologically accepted by the official religion of Yahwism and its followers, and they were used only by the social groups who performed the ritual acts of popular religion.

Finally, in the post-exilic period when Jews return from Babylon to Palestine, the JPFs are completely absent. This is a very interesting indication of the dramatic changes in Israelite religion. The exile had a strong effect on the Jewish people who considered their past syncretistic religious practices as the main reason for their punishment through exile by their god, Yahweh. This belief led them to purge their religion of pagan elements, such as the images and the figurines, and to follow the path of pure monotheism.

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Representations of the demon-god Bes in Rhodes and Samos during the 7th and 6th centuries BC and their influence on popular religious beliefs: Bes and the ‘fat-bellied demons’

Electra Apostola

Introduction

From the Early Iron Age onwards, various Egyptian artefacts, including amulets, figurines, scarabs and vases made out of faience, bronze, steatite and other materials, were diffused throughout the Syro-Palestine region (Herrmann 1994 with further bibliography; Wilson 1975), Cyprus (Clerc *et al.* 1976), Italy and Etruria (Hölbl 1979), Carthage (Vercoutter 1945) and other sites of the Mediterranean (Velázquez Brieva 2007 with further bibliography). In the Greek world, *Aegyptiaca* were imported from the 10th century BC onwards, but more systematically so from the middle of the 8th to the 6th century BC (Apostola 2015; Hölbl 2005; Kousoulis and Morenz 2007; Pendlebury 1930; Skon-Jedele 1994; Webb 2016). From the late 8th and the 7th centuries BC onwards, local imitations of Egyptian objects were manufactured in workshops of East Greece and later in Naukratis (Gorton 1996; Webb 1978).

Faience amulets and figurines representing various Egyptian deities, such as the dwarf demon-gods Bes and Ptah-Pataikos, members of the Memphite triad (Ptah, Sekhmet, Nefertem), Isis with Horus, etc. comprise a significant part of *Aegyptiaca*. Most of them have been found in sanctuaries of Rhodes and Samos, at Perachora, in Crete, and at Miletus and Ephesus. This paper focus on Bes figures from Rhodes and Samos, the areas with the highest concentration of Egyptian archaeological evidence during the Archaic Period. It attempts to decipher the multiple connotations of this material by analyzing it with regard to its archaeological and historical context and through commenting on *comparanda* from ancient Egypt and other sites of the Mediterranean. It will also consider possible semantic influences of Bes representations on indigenous popular religion of the Archaic Period through the investigation of their affinities with the ‘fat-bellied demons’.

The multiple connotations of Bes in Ancient Egypt

The nature and identity of Bes in ancient Egypt remains a complex issue. This name is actually a generic term used to describe different dwarf deities, such as Bes (*bs*), Aha (*aHA*), Soped (*spd*), Hit (*hjtj*) and others, with similar features and properties (Dasen 1993: 55-56 with further bibliography). The earliest certain representations of the demon-god can be traced back to the magic knives of the Middle Kingdom (*c.* 2040-1660 BC), where a lion-headed demon, usually named *aHA* (Aha = ‘the fighter’), is depicted as protector of the sun god, among other theriomorphic entities (Altenmüller 1965: 152-154). During the New Kingdom (*c.* 1540-1070 BC), Bes acquires his characteristic form as an anthropomorphized bandy-legged dwarf represented naked, standing, facing front with hands on his thighs and wearing a feather crown (Herrmann and Staubli 2010: 69-73; Romano 1989: I, 58-122). A partial or full profile of his image, occasionally represented dancing or playing a musical instrument such as the tambourine or double flute, is also in evidence, but less common (Romano 1989: I, 64-77; Tran Tam Tinh 1986: 106). During the Third Intermediate (*c.* 1070-664 BC) and Late Period (*c.* 664-332 BC) Bes is usually depicted with a grimace on his face, moustache and cheek whiskers, a protruding tongue, a paunchy belly and a tall feather headdress. Occasionally he may carry and nurse a child or small figure (Dasen 1993: 59, 74; Herrmann and Staubli 2010: 73 fig. 33) or sitting on the shoulders of a pregnant woman or a musician (Dasen 1993: 73).

The term demon-god is used here to denote the demonic origin of the god Bes, who was associated with hybrid entities dwelling in marginal zones or in the underworld (Dasen 1993: 60-64). His demonic nature was also evident in his role as a hypostasis of Re, indicated by the solar character of his iconography from the New Kingdom onwards and the appearance of Bes Pantheos during the Late Period, an ithyphallic composition with wings and multiple animal heads that represented the multiple aspects of the sun god (Altenmüller 1975: 721; Dasen 1993: 59, 64-66). Bes was considered a deity of popular religion, since he was usually worshipped within the domestic space. He was not incorporated in the official cult as an individual deity until the Late Period, although his image was depicted on walls of the temples of great deities, such as Hathor, as well as in royal temples and tombs (Altenmüller 1975: 721-722). He was closely associated with the region of Memphis, as the multiple Bes bronze and faience figures indicate (Daressy 1905-1906: 183-194). During the Graeco-Roman period (*c.*

332 BC- 395 AD), Bes was worshipped as a fertility deity in a sanctuary at Saqqara (Dasen 1993: 81).

Due to his role as hypostasis of Re Bes's protective and apotropaic power affected different spheres of human life (Altenmüller 1975: 721-722; Dasen 1993: 64-65). He was mainly regarded as protector of the household, women and childbirth as well as sexuality, but he was equally significant in the sphere of the underworld, in music and dance, in sleep and dreams (Dasen 1993: 67-77; Tran Tam Tinh 1986: 106; Wilson 1975: 80-81). The demon-god also appeared as a protector against various dangerous and poisonous animals, when he was depicted as a 'Master of Animals' (Wilson 1975: 83). Representations of Bes on royal chariots and other weapons indicate his protective role in warfare, whereas in the Late and Greco-Roman Periods he was associated with wine (Dasen 1993: 77-78).

Amulets of Bes were worn mainly by children and women and were usually placed in the tomb to continue their protective role in the afterlife (Dasen 1993: 77; Herrmann and Staubli 2010: 69). In magical spells for speeding up delivery, a Bes or Pataikos figurine had to be placed on the vertex or forehead of the pregnant woman (Dasen 1993: 70-71). However, the amuletic forms of the demon-god seemed to incorporate all of his protective and apotropaic powers against evil and chaotic forces.

Representations of Bes in archaic Rhodes

Representations of Bes were very frequent in the Mediterranean during the Early Iron Age, including not only faience figures and amulets, but also scarabs, terracotta statuettes and vases (Velázquez Brieva 2007). In Phoenicia and Cyprus, where Bes had been known since the Second Millennium BC, he was often represented as a 'Master of Animals' or he was conflated with various demons of Near Eastern origin (Wilson 1975: 83-100).

From the mid-8th to the mid-6th century BC the image of the Egyptian demon-god became popular in the Aegean. The greatest assemblage of Bes representations in the Aegean was found in Rhodes, in the votive deposits of the three archaic sanctuaries of Athena at Lindos (Blinkenberg 1931: 343-344; Skon-Jedele 1994: 2207-2012), Ialysos (Figure 1; Skon-Jedele 1994: 2373-2391), and, to a lesser extent, at Camirus (Jacopi 1932-1933: 306-321; Skon-Jedele 1994: 1992-1997). These sanctuaries grew in significance as trading points in the Eastern Mediterranean, as the abundance of imported votive indicate (Kourou 2014: 83-87). Some of the Bes figures come from the excavations of Salzmann and Billioti in the acropolis or the necropolis of Camirus and are housed today in the Louvre and in the British Museum (Hölbl 2016; Skon-Jedele 1994, 1994-1997). However, Bes figures have also been discovered in sanctuaries of other fertility goddesses, e.g. in the Artemis sanctuary at Ephesus (Hölbl 1978), the Aphrodite temple at Miletus (Hölbl 1999), the Eileithyia cave at Inatos in Crete (Marinatos 2000: 184-185), the Aphrodite temple at Thera (Hölbl 2006: 80-82, 91-93).

This paper studies the material from the Archaeological Museum of Rhodes. Most of Bes figures and amulets from the island date to the 7th and 6th centuries BC and follow the typical representation of the Third Intermediate and Late Periods. Although the greatest assemblage of Bes figures in the Aegean has been found at Lindos, Bes figures and amulets from the votive deposit of Ialysos show the greatest variety regarding their typological and iconographical features. A series of faience double-faced figures of Bes seem to be variations of a type representing the demon god squatting on a flat base with arms slightly bent and hands resting against the sides of the full stomach (Figure 2a, b; Skon-Jedele 1994: 2373-2376, nos. 4375-4378). There are cut out areas between arms or legs and torso. The head is covered with a crown of four upright plumes with outline shown in relief and concave inner part. The brow is rendered by vertical and horizontal incised lines above the deeply recessed eyes. The face has a bulbous nose and the mouth is surrounded by a drooping mustache and a beard marked by incised horizontal lines below the cheek. The bridge of the nose is marked by a channel like horizontal incision. The glaze-when preserved - has a brilliant turquoise color. Some examples show that these pieces were pierced laterally for suspension. Double-faced Bes amulets of the same type come from the votive deposits of Lindos (Blinkenberg 1931: 344, no. 1228, pl. 54; Skon-Jedele 1994: 2208-2209, no. 3458) and Camirus (Hölbl 2016: 239). This Egyptian type dates to the 25th-26th Dynasties (*c.* 744-525 BC), as examples from Giza, Sanam (Hölbl 1979: I, 199) and Abydos (see Petrie Museum, UC 43182) suggest and it was spread out in Israel/ Palestine (e.g. Tell Ğemme, Achsib, Tell en Nasbe, see Herrmann 1994: 364-365, nos. 414-417), in Italy (Hölbl 1979: I, 199, II, 117-118, nos. 505-508, plates 55-59) and in Malta (Hölbl 1989: no. 3, 178, pl. 5).

A different type of faience Bes amulet found at Ialysos represents the dwarf demon-god in squatting position, with protuberant eyes and marked pupils, a broad bulbous nose with big nostrils and a beard rendered by vertical incised lines from ear to ear (Figure 3; Skon-Jedele 1994: 2384-2385, no. 4394). The piece is made of fine-textured faience with traces of aquamarine glaze. The plumes of the feather crown are decorated with a vertical line and incised chevrons. There is also a characteristic vertical incised line from navel to the level of the beard. The furrows on the brow are

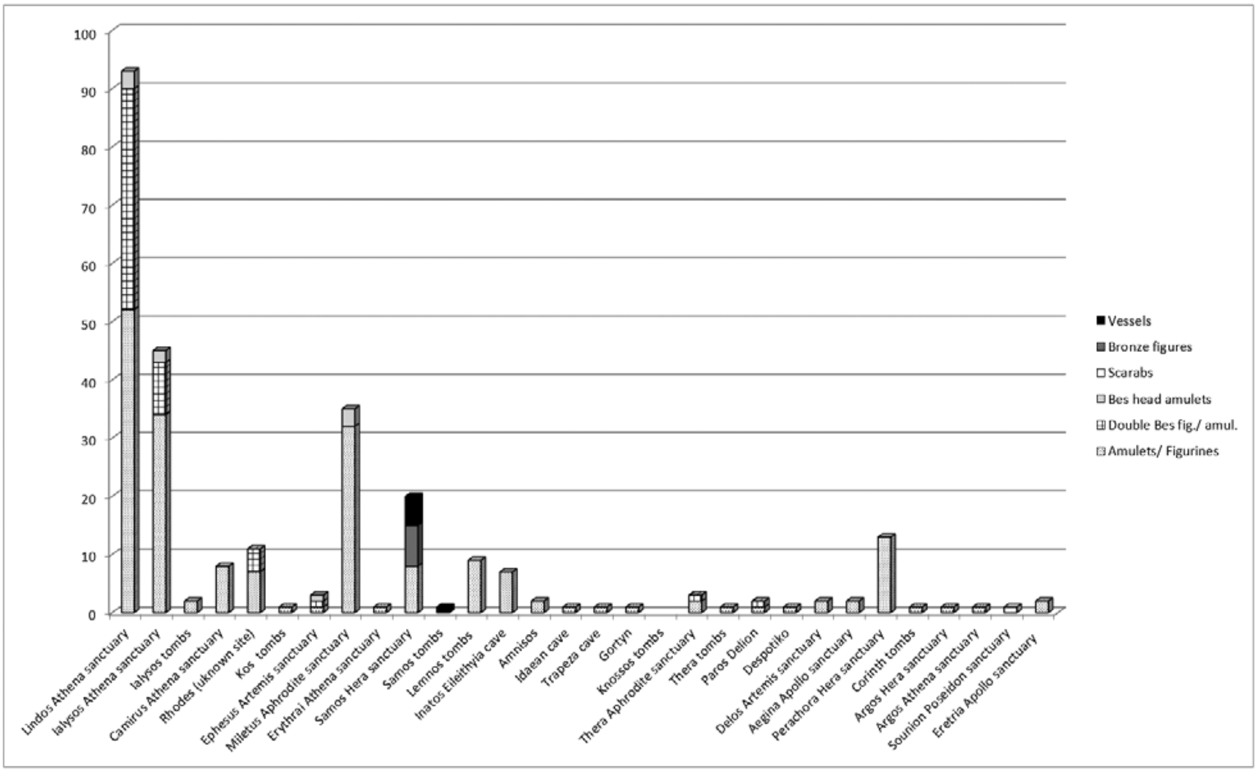

Figure 1. Statistical chart showing the geographical distribution of Bes representations in the Aegean during the 8th-6th centuries BC. The chart does not include artefacts from Camirus housed today in the British Museum and in the Louvre.

rendered with incised lines. The full wig falling on the back ends at a point and is decorated with incised intersecting diagonal lines. A thick tail hanging down from the waist indicates that the figure wears an animal pelt. An almost identical piece has been found in the votive deposit of Camirus (Jacopi 1932-1933: 306, no. 7, 309, fig. 43*;* Skon-Jedele 1994: 1992-1993, no. 3014). This Egyptian type of amulet dating to the 22nd-26th Dynasties has been found at Saqqara (Daressy 1905-1906: 191, no. 38749, pl. 41), at Kition (Clerc *et al.* 1976: 161, no. 2952, pl. 9), at the necropolis of Amathus (Clerc 1991: 82), at Miletus and Argos (Hölbl 2016: 237 with further bibliography) at Carthage and at Sulcis of Sardinia (Velázquez Brieva 2007: 68, pl. 21.1, 2).

Some representations require further discussion. A Bes-head figure and two Bes-head amulets have been found in the sanctuary of Athena at Lindos (Blinkenberg 1931: 343, no. 1227, pl. 54; Skon-Jedele 1994: 2207-2208, no. 3455). The head of the figure has protruding ears, a furrowed brow, deeply set eyes, a broad nose and fleshy lips (Figure 4). A Bes-head of similar size and form has been found at the votive deposit of the Artemis sanctuary at Ephesus (Hölbl 1978: 9). Two similar Bes-head amulets with aegis were also unearthed in the votive deposit of Ialysos (Skon-Jedele 1994: 2447-2448). In Egypt, Bes-head amulets would usually have flat back (for examples see Reisner 1958: 17, nos. 12656-12657, pl. 4, 23) and would have imitated real Bes masks, which were unearthed in domestic contexts and were clearly associated with childbirth rituals (Romano 1989: II, 193-195, no.61). Bes-head amulets, which appeared from the Third Intermediate Period onwards, may have also been inspired by the representation of the god on magical healing plaques (the so-called 'Cippi of Horus') providing protection against dangerous animals (Wilson 1975: 81).

Given the high diffusion of Bes amulets in the Aegean, it is possible that imitations of Bes figures were produced in the local faience workshop. Some coarsely formed figures from Camirus and Ialysos may reinforce this assumption (Figure 5; Jacopi 1932-1933: 308, 318, no. 10, 309, figs. 43, 59; Skon-Jedele 1994: 1995-1996, nos. 3020-3021). One of them seems to be a crude imitation of the aforementioned type (see Figure 3; Jacopi 1932-1933: 306, no. 9, 308, fig. 43; Skon-Jedele 1994: 1993-1994, no. 3015). Another four Bes figures from Miletus have also been considered as products of the Rhodian workshop (Hölbl 1999: 356). However, no certain evidence suggests that Bes figures were systematically manufactured in the local faience workshop.

Indicative of the symbolical connotations of Bes are two large, fragmentarily preserved figures made of fine-grained faience with green-aquamarine glaze and holding a schematically formed small figure from the sanctuary of Athena at Ialysos (Figure 6; Skon-Jedele

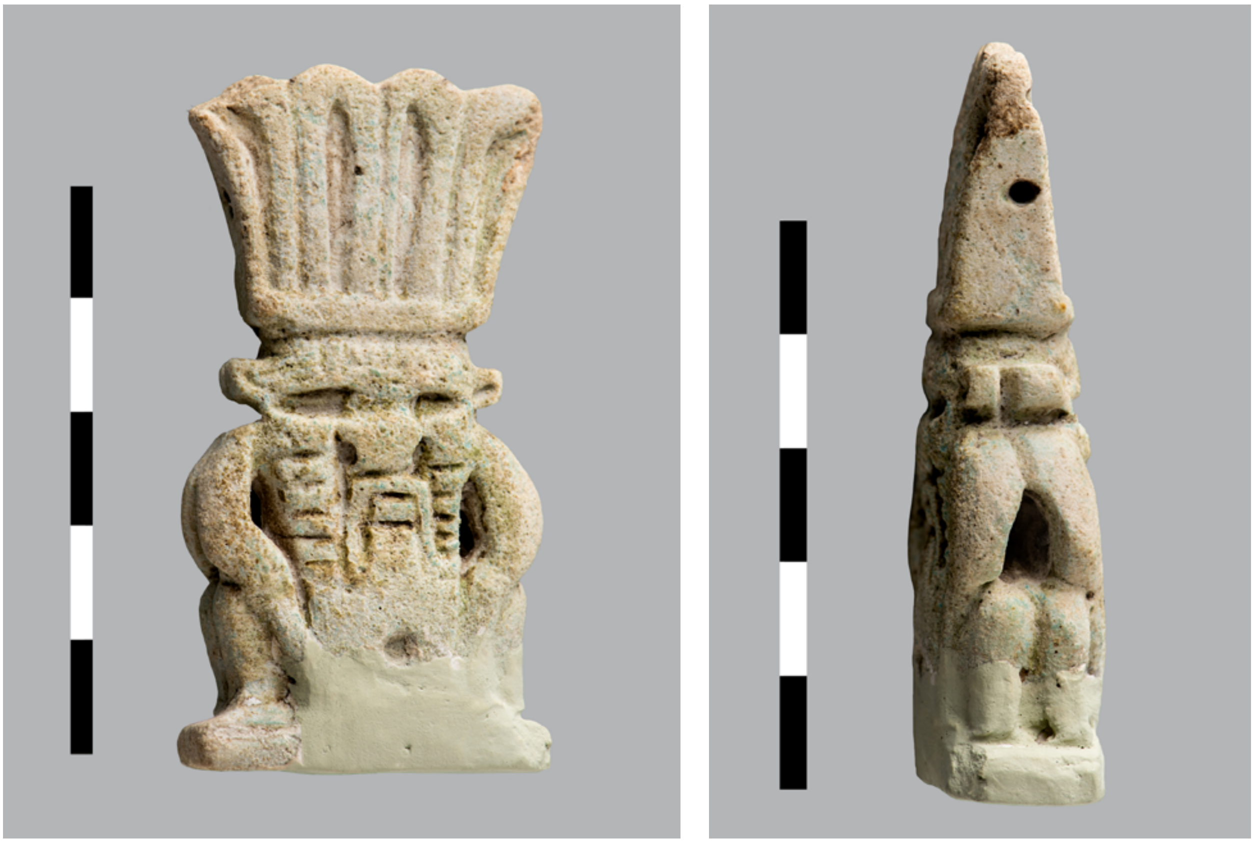

Figure 2a, b. Faience double-faced amulet of Bes (preserved H. 6.2cm) from Ialysos votive deposit, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes inv. no. 10867 (© Ephorate of Antiquities of the Dodecanese).

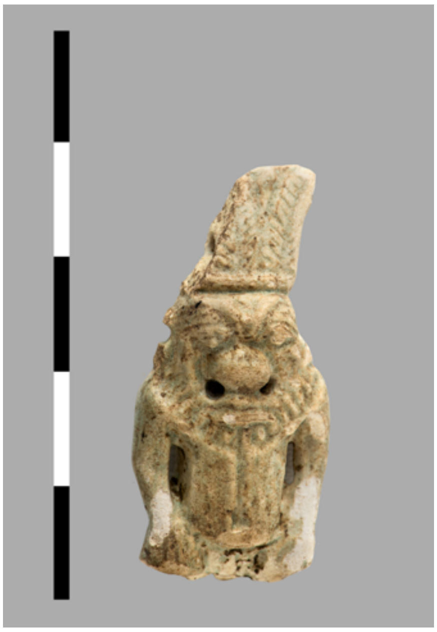

Figure 3. Faience amulet of Bes (preserved H. 3.6cm) from Ialysos votive deposit, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes inv. no. 7725 (© Ephorate of the Antiquities of the Dodecanese).

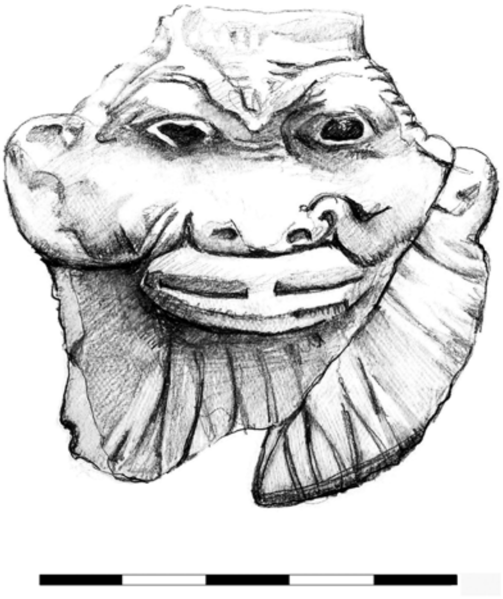

Figure 4. Faience Bes-head (H. 6.2cm) from the votive deposit of Lindos, Istanbul Archaeological Museum (Drawing based on Blinkenberg 1931, pl. 54, no. 1227).

1994: 2395-2398, nos. 4415-4416). Each of these figures has a beard and holds his breast in his right hand as if offered for suckling to the small figure seated on his left arm. Parallels from Egypt indicate that these figures would stand on a floral column (for parallels see: Bulté 1991: 17-29; Clerc *et al.* 1976: 240-241, figs. 19-22). Figures of this type were mainly found in sites of the Nile Delta

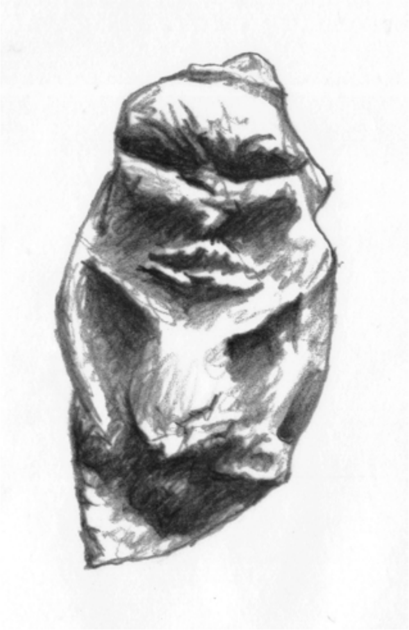

Figure 5. Faience figure of Bes from Camirus, Archaeological Museum (Drawing based on Jacopi 1932-1933, 308, no. 10, 309, fig. 43).

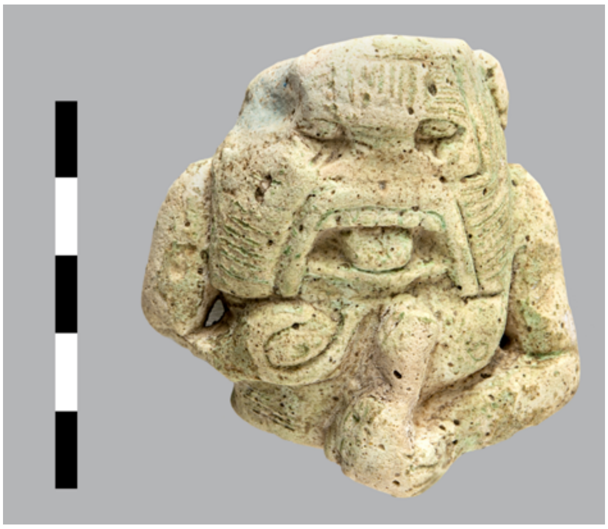

Figure 6. Faience figurine of Bes (preserved H. 6.2cm) with 'tiny figure' from Ialysos votive deposit, Archaeological Museum of Rhodes inv. no. 10866 (© Ephorate of the Antiquities of the Dodecanese).

(Tanis, Bubastis) and were used either as finials attached to wooden furniture or as handles of ritual sistra to avert evil powers threatening childbirth (Bulté 1991: 119-120). The presence of such figures in Rhodes may imply that specific ritual or magical practices could have been transmitted to the Aegean along with the objects.

In contrast to the abundance of Bes figures in votive deposits, the presence of Bes figures in burials is evident only in the Ialysos necropolis (Skon-Jedele 1994: 2337, nos. 4311-4314). It is noticeable that the Bes image first appears in an amphora burial of the Early Geometric period at Marmaro which most likely contained the ashes of a woman (Coldstream 2003: 23; Skon-Jedele 1994: 2337, no. 4313). If the hypothesis is correct, the presence of Bes in this set would be reasonable, given the symbolic connotations of the demon-god.

Representations of Bes in Archaic Samos

Even though Samos has given one of the greatest assemblages of Egyptian and Egyptianizing artefacts during the Geometric and Archaic Periods, the presence of Bes faience figurines and amulets is quite restricted. Five fragmentarily preserved talismans of Bes have been unearthed in the Heraion. Among them there was a worn flat-backed fragmentarily preserved figure, with hair rendered with crosshatched diamonds (Webb 2016: 65, pl. 10, 7.8), similar to the type found in the sanctuaries of Athena at Lindos and Ialysos (see Figure 3). A significant finding is a fragmentarily preserved Bes figurine standing on a papyriform-headed staff (Webb 2016: 66, pl. 10, 11.12), which would be used as a finial, like the above mentioned types from Ialysos. Four crudely made Bes amulets were also found at the sanctuary, which conform to a type modelled only on the front, which may derive from the faience workshop of Naukratis (Figure 7; Webb 2016: 70).

Bes figures in Samos were also incorporated into a rich group of bronze figurines representing various Egyptian deities, animals and royal symbols dating from the 8th to the 6th centuries BC. Of particular interest is a bronze figurine depicting Bes sitting on the shoulders of a flute player (Jantzen 1972: 14-17, pl. 18; Parlasca 1953: 131-132, pl. 12; Skon-Jedele 1994: 1489-1491, no. 1688) (Figure 8). He is holding a tambourine in his left hand, striking the instrument with his right. The hole above the bottom edge of the figure indicates that it could have been originally attached at the top of a staff or a pole and used as a finial attached to furniture. Even though, the presence of holes on the plumes of the feather crown may imply that the object was used as ritual sistrum. This figure recalls Egyptian works of the 25th -26th Dynasties representing Bes playing an instrument or grasping a knife, seated on the shoulders of a man or woman, who would perhaps be playing the flute or tambourine or on a naked woman giving birth (for parallels, see Parlasca 1953: 132-134). It is noticeable that some of them were found in the region of Memphis (Bulté 1991: 73, no a37; Weiss 2012: 821, no. 1158, pl. 55b). The position of the demon-god on the shoulder of a figure generally indicates protection over motherhood and childbirth (Weiss 2012: 324-325). Thus, the bronze figurine of Bes from Samos

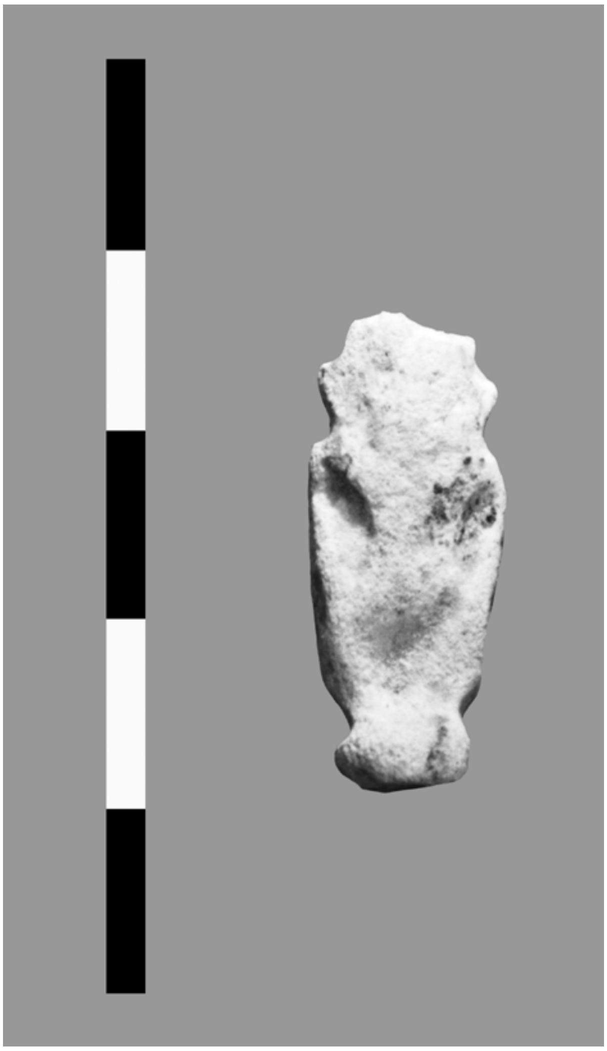

Figure 7. Faience amulet of Bes (H. 2.5cm) from the Heraion of Samos. Samos Archaeological Museum, inv. V 390 (©D-DAI-ATH Neg.Nr. 1978/1202).

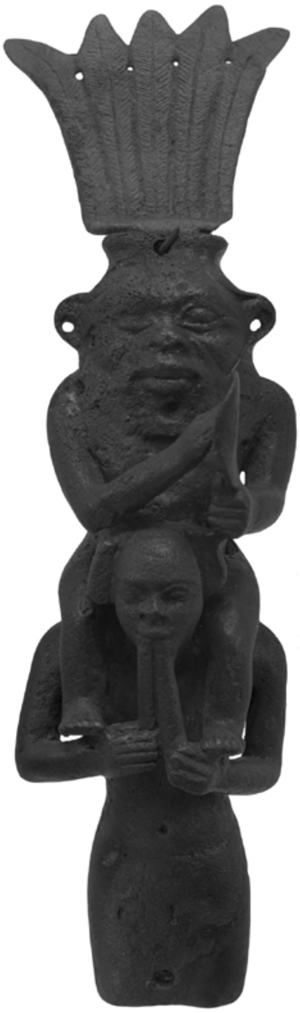

Figure 8. Bronze figure (finial) representing Bes on the shoulders of a flute player (preserved H. 12cm) from the Heraion of Samos. Samos Archaeological Museum, exc. inv. B 353 (©D-DAI-ATH-1970/1016, photographed by E. Feiler).

may reflect his association with music or with a childbirth ceremony.

The material from the Heraion also includes the head of a vase in the shape of the god Bes, dated to the early 6th century BC, which may have been manufactured in the faience workshop of Naukratis or Rhodes (Skon-Jedele 1994: 1611-1613, no. 2324; Webb 1978: 122, no. 825). In Ancient Egypt these containers, often used in fertility rites, were filled with water from the Nile inundation and were generally associated with the idea of rejuvenation (Clerc et al. 1976: 230-245). Another four fragmentarily preserved vases in the form of Bes from the Heraion, the one made of glazed steatite and the other three made of faience, are dated to the late 7th century and have been considered imports (Webb 2016: 56-57).

A vase in the form of Bes wearing an animal pelt and holding a gazelle or ibex was also found in a monolithic sarcophagus dated to 580-550 BC, which contained the remains of a child burial in the west necropolis of the island (Figure 9; Hölbl 2005: 508, no. 64; Skon-Jedele 1994: 1632-1633, no. 2723; Webb 1978: 122, no. 824, pl. 19). Although its material and style indicates that it is of Egyptian origin, its lid resembles works of the Greek archaic faience factory (Webb 2016: 57). According to Hölbl (2005: 508), the depicted animal is an ibex, the horn of which stands for the word *rnpt* (‘year’) or *rnpj* (‘rejuvenation’). This concept would be compatible with the ingredients of such a vase, as described above. However, Webb (1978: 122) suggests that a gazelle is depicted, the sacred animal of Seth, thus this composition may reflect the triumph of Bes, as follower of Horus, over the destructive power of Horus’ rival

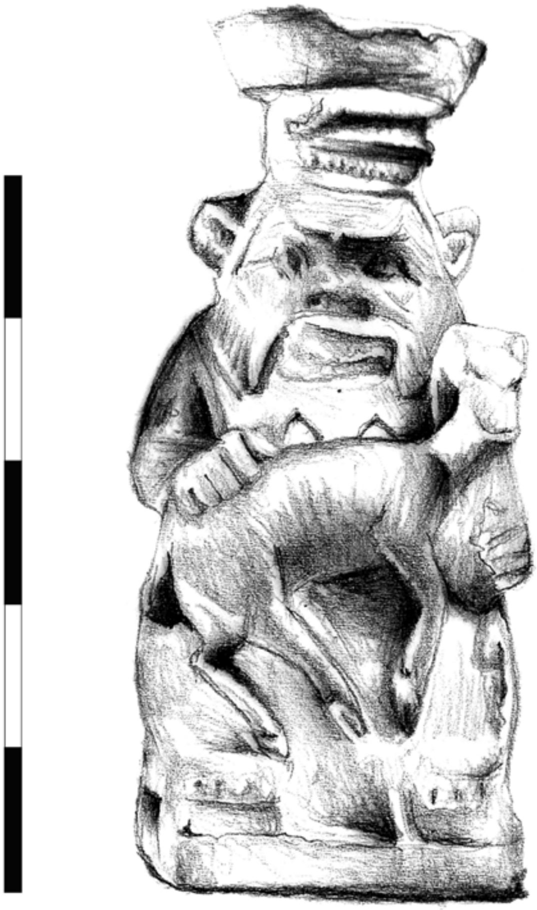

Figure 9. Faience figured aryballos in the shape of Bes (H. 6.8cm). Grave 44, West Necropolis, Samos. Vienna Kunsthist. Mus., inv. V 1950 (Drawing based on Hölbl 2005, cat. no. 64).

god, Seth. In any case, the initial complex meaning of this composition would have hardly been known in the Aegean.

Archaeological and historical contextualization

In order to define the reasons behind the significant concentration of Bes figures in Rhodes and Samos, it is essential to study the archaeological and historical context of the artefacts. It is noteworthy that the majority of Bes representations in Rhodes derive from the sanctuary of Athena Lindia, a goddess of kourotrophic character, as implied by the nature of the votive offerings (Blinkenberg 1931: 34; Hadzisteliou Price 1978: 154-155). The cult of Hera in Samos also had strong kourotrophic connotations (Baumbach 2004: 147-164). Bes figures in both areas were found together with Egyptian divine entities and sacred animals, which were closely associated with fertility and motherhood, such as Isis with Horus, Mut, Bastet, cats, Apis bull, female naked women (Weiss 2012: 496-506). Thus, the distribution scheme suggests that in some cases dedication of Bes figures may have been prompted by their appropriateness to the worshipped fertility goddess.

The introduction of Bes amulets and figurines within the Aegean and their great concentration in the sanctuaries of Rhodes and Samos should be interpreted in relation to the general historical context. After the Dark Ages, overseas contacts in the Aegean were reactivated as a result of the growth of Cypriot and Phoenician trading networks in the Mediterranean. Phoenician commercial activity in the Aegean has been archaeologically testified mainly in Crete and the Dodecanese, but also in the Northern Aegean, Cyclades and Attica (see Stampolidis 2012 with further bibliography). In Archaic Rhodes, the significant role of Phoenician traders is indicated by the high quantity of pottery and metallic artefacts, by local imitations, but mostly by the establishment of a Phoenician pottery workshop at Ialysos (Kourou 2014: 83-84). The great abundance of Cypriot pottery, local imitations, along with Cypriot limestone and terracotta statuettes reveal equally close contacts and influence from Cyprus (Kourou 2014: 84-86). Diodorus (1.68.8) mentions that Phoenicians and Greeks had been admitted into Egypt during the reign of Psammetichos I. Although Phoenician presence is attested especially around Memphis, it is restricted at Naukratis (on Phoenicians in Egypt see Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006: 7-8; Vittman 2003: 44-83). The same holds true for the presence of Cypriots at Naukratis (Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006: 7)

However, direct cultural contact between Egypt and the Greek world was intensified from the 8th to the 6th century BC and was exemplified by various ways. Greek traders were active in the Nile Delta from the middle of the 7th century BC or even earlier (Boardman 1996:141-180; Ebbinghaus 2006: 187-202; Malkin 2011 81-87), but trade obtained a more profound character only after the foundation of Naukratis at the end of the 7th century BC (for general studies on Naukratis, see: Möller 2000; Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006). Futhermore, written testimonies refer to dedication of pharaonic gifts by the Saite Pharaohs to various Greek sanctuaries (Hdt. 2.159; 2. 182; 3.47; for the dedication of gifts, see: Ebbinghaus 2006: 189-191; Lloyd 2007 with further bibliography). Cross cultural interaction was further strengthened through the presence of Greek soldiers in the Nile Delta. According to Herodotus' references (Hdt 2.152-2.154) Ionian and Carian mercenaries were recruited in the Egyptian army by Psammetichos I (664-610 BC) and some of them ascended in high offices, were gradually assimilated in the Egyptian society by marrying Egyptian women and participated in religious ceremonies or following local burial customs (Haider 2001; Vittmann 2003, 197–206). This is strongly indicated by the discovery of Egyptian bronze votives with Greek dedicatory inscriptions (Weiss 2012: 511-512). During the same period Egyptian technology, monumental architecture and statuary seem to have significantly inspired and influenced Greek sculpture, sacral architecture and vase painting (Boardman 1996: 180-194; Villing and Schlotzhauer 2006 with further bibliography).

Some scholars suggested that Egyptian bronzes in the Heraion were mainly dedicated by Greek mercenaries or their Egyptian wives during their travel back home (Ebbinghaus 2006: 194-195; Weiss 2012: 501-511, with further bibliography). The discovery of Egyptian stone statuettes with Greek inscriptions, which have been ascribed to Greek mercenaries, in sanctuaries of East Greece as well as bronze votives with Greek inscriptions in Egypt strengthens this assumption (Ebbinghaus 2006: 194-195; Vittmann 2003, 203-206). Due to the complex nature of cultural interaction between Egypt and Greeks in the 8th-6th centuries, it is more likely that votives with representation of Bes at the aforementioned sanctuaries were dedicated by women of Greek traders and mercenaries as objects of personal value, in order to thank the deity for a successful delivery or ask for divine help.

The introduction of Egyptian figurines and amulets in the Aegean may have been further associated with the presence of Egyptian or Syro-Palestinian craftsmen, healers, seers and magicians, spreading magic spells and other stories, which may have later been incorporated into Greek mythological tradition (Burkert 1992: 40-87). Representations on stone and terracotta statuettes from Cyprus dating from the 7th to the 5th centuries BC indicate that Egyptian amulets were worn by women and children as parts of necklaces around the neck, over the shoulders or above the abdomen, although they could also adorn cultic statues (Clerc *et al.* 1976: 170-172). Morphological affinities between many amulets of Bes found in sites of Rhodes implies that some of them could have been worn as necklaces.

Bes figures and the 'fat-bellied demons'

The distribution of Bes figures within the Aegean had an important influence on a series of locally made wooden or terracotta statuettes or plastic vases of dwarfs, known in the bibliography as 'fat-bellied demons', 'squatting dwarfs, 'Dickbauch Dämonen', etc. (for names, see Arjona Pérez 2013: 23). These works appeared from the early 6th century to *c.* 520 BC on various islands of the Aegean (e.g. Rhodes, Samos, Delos, Paros, Aegina), in the north Aegean and Mainland Greece, and various sites of the western Mediterranean (Arjona Pérez 2013: 25-27; Dasen 1993: 200-245, 307-319; Mandel 2005: 143-153; Sinn 1983). The statuettes are usually depicted standing on a plinth with bent legs and arms around the protruding belly. Some of them wear sandals, petasos or pilos and they may carry a basket with offerings, a shield or a child seated on their shoulders (Figure 10; Arjona Pérez 2013: 24; Dasen 1993: 201). Based on the study of pottery styles and material, the manufacture of these figurines has been ascribed to Rhodian, Ionian or Argive workshops (Arjona Pérez 2013: 25; Bell 1981, 15-16; Dasen 1993: 200 for further discussion).

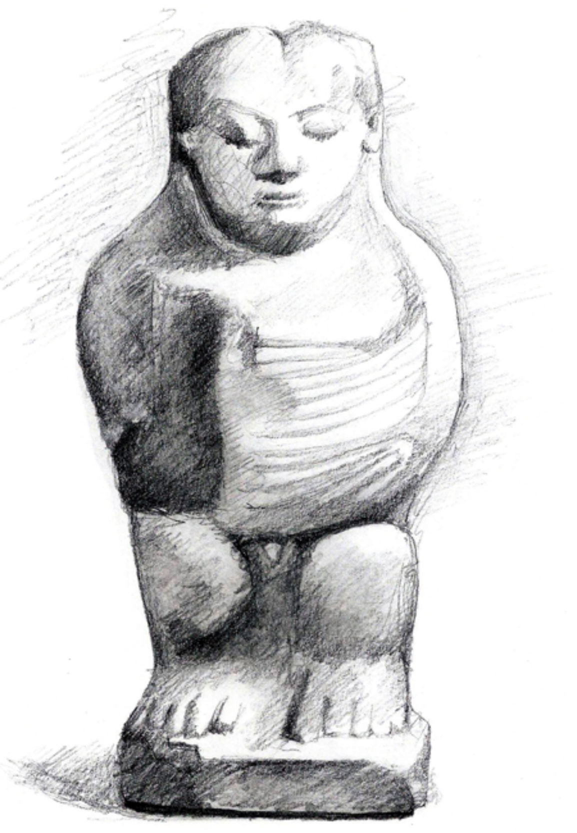

Figure 10. Terracotta figurine of a 'fat-bellied' demon (H. 19cm) from the West necropolis of Samos (tomb no. 21, of a girl). Kassel, Staatliche Kunstsammlung, S 55 (Drawing based on Dasen 1993, pl. 78.3).

It has been suggested that the iconographical type of the statuettes was derived from Bes or from Ptah-Pataikos, another dwarf-like demon considered to be a manifestation of Amun Re or Ptah and functioning as protector of family life against dangerous animals and evil forces (Arjona Pérez 2013: 27-28; Bell 1981, 15-16; Sinn 1983: 88-90). Although specific features of the 'fat-bellied demons', such as the human face and the subdued smile, are reminiscent of Ptah-Pataikos figures, the general pose and the protruding belly constitute typical characteristics of Bes (Dasen 1993: 201; Sinn 1983: 89).

A link between the Egyptian dwarf, demon-god Bes and the Greek 'fat-bellied demons' can be traced in a wooden statuette of the 7th century BC, found at the Heraion of Samos (Figure 11; Dasen 1993: 202-203, pl. 79.1; Sinn 1983: 90). It is an ithyphallic dwarf with a

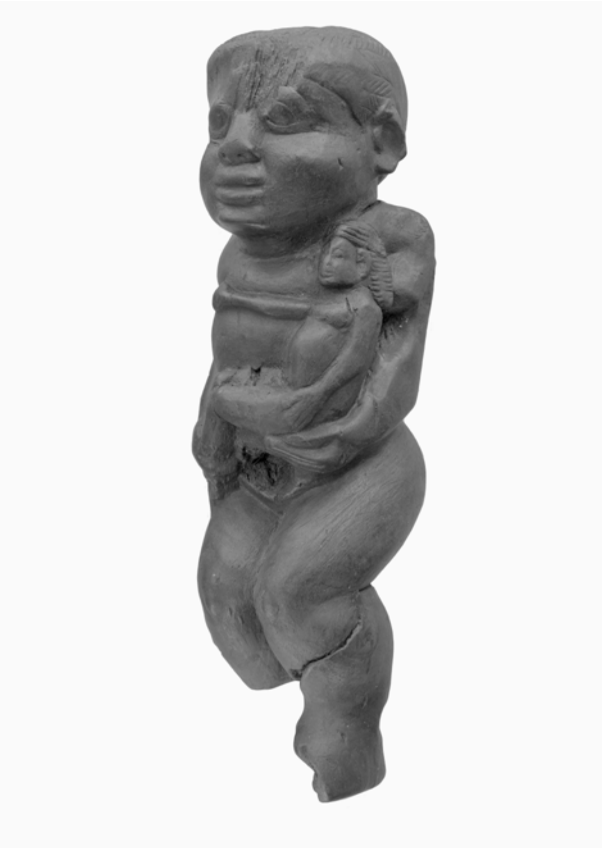

Figure 11. Wooden figurine of a 'kourotrophic demon' (H. 21.9 cm) from the Heraion of Samos. Samos Archaeological Museum (©D-DAI-ATH-Samos-6875, photographed by G. Hellner).

tiny human figure on its left hand. It generally differs from the mass-produced terracotta forms, since it has more grotesque facial features. The large eyes, the flat nose, the coarse lips, as well as the phallus, which was originally evident, show strong similarities with Bes's features. The deformed human face, which probably underlines his apotropaic character, evokes the monstrous face of Bes. This posture of that statuette is reminiscent of the general attitude of the demon-god represented as suckling or holding a small figure. The example from Ialysos discussed earlier (Figure 6), which was imported in the Aegean before the middle of the 6th BC, indicates that these figures were used as models for the formation of the 'fat-bellied demons'.

Affinities between Bes and 'fat-bellied demons' can also be traced in the sphere of symbolism. Like Bes, 'fat-bellied demons' had kourotrophic and a significant number was uncovered in sanctuaries of kourotrophic deities like Athena in Lindos, Hera in Samos or in Perachora, Artemis in Ephesus and elsewhere (Arjona Pérez 2013: 25-27; Hadzisteliou Price 1978: 76; Sinn 1983). Sinn (1983: 91) points out that the close association of 'fat-bellied demons' with kourotrophic deities recalls the relation of Bes with Egyptian female deities, Hathor or Isis. Mandel (2005: 144-145) noted that the hermaphrodite features of these figures, along with their posture and paunch belly can be indicative of an intrinsic feminine sexual power, personifying the attendants of the prehistoric Mother goddess or her Olympian descendants. 'Fat-bellied demons' were also considered as apotropaic creatures driving away evil forces (Arjona Pérez 2013: 29). It is noticeable that some of these figures come from child burials, a scheme recalling Bes's presence in children's tombs (Dasen 1993: 203; Sinn 1983, 89).

The apotropaic-protective role and the kourotrophic implications extending to the realm of death, as indicated by the deposition of these figures in tombs, reveal that Greek artists did not only combine iconographical details from Bes and Pataikos, but also adopted ideas incorporated in these models. During the process of the transformation, either the theriomorphic facial elements of Bes or the deformed features of Pataikos are replaced by more human faces of effeminate Ionian men with curls. The transformation of lion headed Bes models into more humanized dwarf-like entities implies that it is not only the form that is adopted, but also the general concept. The apotropaic-prophylactic role and kourotrophic aspects of the Egyptian demon-god is transformed in order to express indigenous religious ideas. This hypothesis is strengthened by the short-lived appearance of the 'fat bellied demons', a period roughly corresponding to the time of the intensive introduction of Bes and Pataikos figures.

Conclusions

The implications of Bes representations in Rhodes and Samos are manifold. Their high concentration in Rhodes and their close typological affinities with Bes figures from Egypt, Palestine, and Italy implies that the island, due to its strategic location, served as an ideal redistribution centre of these items within the Mediterranean. As products of the complicated nexus of trade routes, these figures had an intrinsic value as exotic items, but their high concentration in the coastal sanctuaries of East Greece can hardly be explained in commercial terms alone. Bes amulets had served as items of personal magical protection and as votive offerings, mainly at sanctuaries of deities associated with fertility. Although they were not luxury objects, they could have been items indicating social prestige, since people of the Mediterranean were attracted to the mysterious land of the Nile, a place of primitive wisdom and magic. The rare presence of Bes amulets and figurines in tombs from Rhodes and Samos indicates that funerary connotations of the demon-god were not that popular in the Aegean. However, a few of Bes representations in burials of women and children are more indicative of his association with fertility rather than his relation to death concepts.

Due to the complex nature of commercial and cultural interconnections in the Eastern Mediterranean the identity of the owners and dedicators of these figures still remains a matter of controversy. They could have been Phoenicians or Cypriots, although the strong direct cultural contacts described above indicate that they were more likely Greek traders and mercenaries of East Greece, familiarized with the religious concepts of the Delta. Typological features of faience Bes figures strengthen this assumption, since they resemble Egyptian works, especially those found around Memphis, and are generally different from figures found in Israel/Palestine, Cyprus, and Phoenician sites of Western Mediterranean.

Be that as it may, the carriers and dedicators of Bes figures in the sanctuaries, especially women, would have been aware of the basic connotations and magical powers of the demon-god. This is partly confirmed by the possible local production of faience vases and figures of Bes which prove that the Egyptian demon-god was a popular figure in East Greece. The Bes image and its connotations might have had a significant impact on popular religious beliefs, as indicated by the strong similarities of the 'fat-bellied demons' with the Egyptian demon-god. These affinities do not simply reflect the adoption of an Egyptian schema, but rather the introduction of new ideas about the apotropaic role and the protective kourotrophic aspects of deformed and theriomorphic dwarfs. These ideas could have been creatively transformed and incorporated in the local subtext of popular religious ideology.

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Of curses and cults: private and public ritual in Classical Xypete

Jessica L. Lamont and Georgia Boundouraki

Introduction

Far from bustling crowds, smoky sacrifices, and the din of civic festivals, this chapter first explores private ritual practices: discrete if not muted rites beyond the public gaze, arguably on the margins of 'polis religion' itself (Bremmer 2010, with Sourvinou-Inwood 2000a, b; Kindt 2012). Engaging the volume's larger theme of popular religion and ritual, the place of binding spells and curse tablets is examined herein – the names and spells incised upon thin, disposable strips of lead in Classical Attica. Though aspects of ritualized cursing were undertaken in private, the practice was certainly 'popular' in the sense that it was widespread, familiar to many, and employed against Athenians of various social strata, from politicians to shopkeepers to slaves. Underlying cursing praxis was the notion that, through such rituals, individuals could activate or manipulate supernatural forces toward personal, perhaps even sinister ends. Often this involved hampering, immobilizing, or impeding an enemy or rival; indeed, these were spells that promised to 'bind down' their victims (καταδέω). Such rites were stigmatized as impious by Plato, who condemns those seeking to harm others through ἐπαγωγαῖς and καταδέσμοις (*Resp.* 364c; *Leg.* 908d-909d). These 'spells' and 'bindings' were vehicles through which individuals could persuade the gods to do their bidding; they might be harnessed to punish the just and unjust alike and this, for Plato, was grounds for objection. Despite the surreptitious circumstances in which such rites were performed, the use of incantations and curse tablets was far from uncommon in Plato's own day, the world of Classical Athens. In exploring such murky practices, this project aims to reunite ritualized cursing with one of its most popular vehicles, the curse tablet, and to contextualize both within the understudied Attic deme of Xypete.

The chapter proceeds in three interwoven parts. First, ritual cursing and curse tablets are surveyed in brief, with a focus on the rites that accompanied written binding spells. Second, we examine a newly-uncovered cache of Attic curse tablets from a cemetery beneath modern Piraeus Street, likely within the ancient deme of Xypete (Figure 1, ΜΠ 11948). A translation and brief discussion of the binding spells follows. Lastly, this small community knew far more than rites of cursing; the local landscape was dappled with shrines and sanctuaries that illuminate the various *public* facets of religious life. The private act of cursing is finally situated alongside the public rites of the deme, in order to access the many faces of ritual practice within a small Attic community. Literary and epigraphic sources are evaluated alongside archaeological finds from recent rescue excavations, and presented together here for the first time.

Curse tablets in Classical Athens

The best literary informants for Classical binding spells are likely the *Laws* and the *Republic,* both of which were composed by an Athenian responding to the practices of his day (though perhaps not representative of them). Indeed, it is Plato who first provides us with the ancient Greek term for curse tablets, κατάδεσμοι, which comes from the compound verb *καταδέω*, 'I bind down.' The word was surely well-known outside of philosophical circles, emerging in various forms upon the tablets themselves. Plato associates the sale of *katadesmoi*, in addition to purifications, initiations, and bewitchments, with a group of itinerant ritual specialists, 'begging priests and seers' (ἀγύρται δὲ καὶ μάντεις); these shadowy peripatetics were known to knock on the doors of the wealthy hoping to sell their wares and services (Pl. *Resp.* 364b-c). Included among these vendors were *goetes* (γόητες), a group that Pherecydes notes were responsible for the making of spells (*FGrH* 3 F47; Dickie 2003: 31). Little is known of these supernatural experts, and Classical literature is largely silent regarding curse tablets more generally (see Faraone 1985, 1989, for indirect references to binding spells in 5th century Athenian theater).

Fortunately, a rich material record supplements the reticent literary sources. Small sheets of lead incised with binding spells – so-called curse tablets – have been found in large numbers across Attica and much of the Mediterranean world (Gager 1992). Indeed, every new cemetery excavated in Athens seems to produce still more (Eliopoulos 2010; Kroustalis and Tsaravopoulos 2008). The following chapter by Yannis Chairetakis shows that binding spells could be incised upon media other than lead, such as ceramic. Some scholars link the emergence of curse tablets in the Greek world to the western settlements of Sicily and Magna Graecia. Of course, cursing was a ritual practice long established in the Near Eastern and Egyptian worlds, and oral versions of so-called 'conditional' curses predate the late 6th century BC in the Greek-speaking Mediterranean (the oath of the settlers at Cyrene provides a good example: ML 5 = Fornara 18). But incised curse tablets are unknown before the late 6th century, where they appear at the site of Selinous, a 're-foundation' of Megara Hyblaia on the southwestern edge of Greek

Sicily. These early *katadesmoi* emerged from the sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros, and are currently the earliest known Greek curse tablets (Willi 2008: 317-321; Curbera 1999: 159-186). The appearance of the Carthaginian name 'Mago' on a 5th century tablet from Selinous, coupled with the prominent Carthaginian presence in western Sicily in the 6th century BC, raises the possibility that Near Eastern or Levantine influence may have catalyzed the Greek practice (Bremmer 2010: 17-18). Surely the spread of writing in the Greek world was also an important piece in this puzzle; *katadesmoi* could only have come into existence once the Greek alphabet and some degree of literacy were sufficiently widespread to permit the writing down of spells upon lead and other materials.

If curse tablets *did* originate in the Greek West – and spread shortly thereafter to Athens, where they appear by the mid 5th century BC – the practice might also shadow the rise of popular courts and forensic oratory (Parker 2011: 260). Indeed, it has been suggested that rhetoric itself as a *techne* may have originated in Sicily with the likes of Korax, Tisias, and Gorgias' teacher Empedokles, and appeared only subsequently in Athens (Eidinow 2007: 145 fn. 14). In both Sicily and Attica, the majority of early curse tablets relate to judicial matters, seemingly composed on account of lawsuits and court litigation. It is also possible that some written binding spells grew out of earlier oral traditions of cursing; again, the technology of writing would then have provided the mechanism by which the spells were committed to lead. Yet as we know them, *katadesmoi* speak to such a range of risks and rivalries that we need not juxtapose an oral origin with the cooption of the practice in the courtroom context. There may well have been oral precedents for some binding curses, while others developed within the judicial realm by the 5th century BC.

How was a curse tablet produced – that is, how did a lead strip become a charged agent capable of 'binding' another person? First, a piece of lead was trimmed and cut to shape. This thin metal strip could then be inscribed with the name of the target or perhaps a longer curse-narrative. As part of a larger binding ritual, the lead tablet was then folded and pierced with a nail. The nails would have further emphasized the sense of binding, as they literally pegged-down, pierced, or restricted the individuals named on the tablet. The curses were then deposited in a subterranean locale – a grave, well, fountain, or perhaps the shrine of a chthonic deity – in order to access powerful agents associated with the underworld (Gager 1992). The process of incising, folding, nailing, and depositing the tablet involved incantations and other rites that do not preserve in the material record alongside the metal sheets and nails. For example, one Attic curse tablet mentions the presence of organic materials within the binding ritual such as wax and a liquid (water or wine), or possibly 'magic thread' if we accept ἐμ [μί]τωι over ἐμ [πο]τῶι: 'I bind them all in lead and in wax and in water/wine/magic thread and in idleness and in obscurity and in ill-repute and in defeat and among tombs' (*DTA* 55, 17-19; for ἐμ [μί]τωι see Parker 2005: 127). Though removed in time and space from the Classical curses under consideration, the *Greek Magical Papyri* capture an array of spoken incantations, ritual actions, and *materia magica* employed during the cursing process. Within the papyri, these could include chants, recited and repeated oral formulae, wax figures, yarn, puppies, flowers, and more. The papyri spells also note the presence within cursing praxis of *ousia*, bits of hair, fingernails, or clothing -the very essence or 'being' – from the person being cursed, especially in erotic curses (e.g., *PGM* IV. 296-335). These bits and pieces of the intended victim are also known from the popular literary imaginary. In Apuleius' *Golden Ass*, for example, Pamphile orders her servant to retrieve hair clippings from her beloved victim; within her eerie laboratory, the witch kept curse tablets ('metal strips engraved with mysterious letters,' 3.17) alongside exhumed parts of human bodies, and crucifixion nails still encrusted with shreds of flesh. Though nothing so grim as Apuleius' description, a curse tablet from the Athenian Agora was found to contain several strands of brown hair, which likely assisted in 'targeting' the spell against the woman Tyche (3rd century AD; Agora Inv. IL 1737; Jordan 1985). Such organic materials rarely survive in the archaeological record, but were important parts of the binding ritual. Judging from the quantity of tablets that carry only the names of individuals (or were even left blank), the writing down of the curse was by no means essential to the binding ritual. It was likely recited orally in all or most cases, but only written down in some.

The considerable number of preserved *katadesmoi* shows that ritual cursing was a widespread practice in the Classical Greek world, and perhaps in Attica particularly so; indeed, there the epigraphic habit ran deep. Binding curses incised upon lead offer insights into the daily difficulties and risks faced by the men and women of Classical Athens. Exposing deep seated fears and insecurities, *katadesmoi* capture the web of relations and values that quietly underpinned Athenian social life. Curse tablets and the binding rituals that the tablets embody pervaded all realms of daily life, exposing and preserving a broad range of Attic society; this included prominent political figures (*DTA* 11, 24, 30, 47-50), household slaves (*DTA* 75), actors, soldiers, prostitutes, and various sorts of craftsmen (*DTA* 45, 55, 68, 69). Through these impassioned texts, voices emerge from otherwise silent strata of society. Curse tablets have traditionally been categorized on the basis of thematic content and presumed circumstances of composition: judicial, agonistic/theatrical, commercial, love curses, and 'prayer for justice' curses (Audollent 1904; Faraone 1991; Versnel 1991: 62; Aneziri 2009: 198). More recently, challenges to these distinctions have arisen on the basis that, in some cases, single tablets can fit into more than one of these categories or, sometimes, none at all; furthermore, the targeted individuals cannot be understood as somehow representative of the cursing agent himself (Eidinow 2007: 140-155).

Athens in the popular imaginary often conjures thoughts of a glistening Parthenon, the deep *pathos* of Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus*, or the probing inquiries of Plato's Socrates. Athens also plays host to notions of cooperative egalitarianism – a body of citizen equals working together in the Assembly to govern themselves and a unified polis. Yet contemporary curse tablets provide a glimpse of these same citizens trying desperately to outdo, edge-out, harm, or impede one another. They remind us that daily life in Classical Athens was filled with insecurities, complications, and rivalries that lurked just below the surface of an ostensibly unified polis. That Athenian society teemed with such emotion, competition, and antagonism is obvious from forensic oratory, Old Comedy, ostracism, etc.; curse tablets reveal another layer at the level of popular and private ritual. Curse tablets served as vehicles through which these social frustrations were released, and risk was confronted. They provided a contained, quiet outlet for aggressions and grievances, but were confined to the silent tombs and corpses with which they were buried. Yet the great popularity of curse tablets – in addition to 'counter-curse' tablets, which aimed to *bind back* anyone who may have cursed the commissioner (ἀντικαταδεσμεύω, *SEG* XLIX 320) – suggests that *katadesmoi* were perceived as very real threats in antiquity. Viewed as effective tools for harnessing divine power, they were used in addressing and combatting life's riskiest situations.

The rituals that accompanied cursing were undertaken with a degree of secrecy, and can expose the desires, anxieties, and insecurities of individual Athenians, even if many adhere to rather formulaic patterns. Within a deeply agonistic society, in which uncertainty and risk were ever-present parts of daily life, spells and incantations were familiar undertakings for the average Athenian; at least cursing, if not binding spells, could even have a civic face. A good example emerges in the year 415 BC, when the polis decreed that the name Alkibiades 'be publically cursed by all priests and priestesses' (Plut. *Alk.* 22.4). Individual action and agency thus played a role in creating the larger social dimensions of religious experience (those of 'polis religion'), yet individuals and private actions were also steeped in (and reciprocally structured by) civic ritual phenomena.

A cache of Classical curses and ΜΠ 11948

Over three-quarters of published Greek curse tablets carry mere lists of names, or are otherwise too brief to understand the circumstances behind their creation (Eidinow 2007: 154). Many Attic curse tablets from the Classical period also lack a provenance; even in tablets known to have come from a certain sub-region, like the Piraeus, the specific circumstances of excavation (and thus depositional context) are usually unknown. These conditions make the discovery of a cache of five Classical Attic curse tablets – found together *in situ* during rescue excavations in 2003 – all the more remarkable. Pierced by iron nails, the tablets were deposited in a grave containing the remains of a cremated female. All five sheets were inscribed with very similar binding curses; this, too, is unusual and of interest. Because the cache was found in a late 5th/early 4th century BC grave, deposited at or soon after burial, it is possible to reconstruct some circumstances surrounding the binding ritual. We begin by describing the archaeological context of the tablets, in order to relate the ritual occasion to its depositional setting.

Rescue excavations in the area of New Phaleron were undertaken from 2001-2004 by the former ΚΣΤ Ephoreia for Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities, under the supervision of Maria Petritaki. Along modern Piraeus Street, a Classical cemetery was uncovered, dating from the late 5th through 4th centuries BC on the basis of grave types and pottery styles (for more on context, see Petritaki 2009: 463-465; 2010: 450-451; Lamont 2015). Associated with a pyre-burial was a cache of five curse tablets. Four are clearly legible; the fifth is faintly incised and difficult to read, but seems to carry a binding spell similar to the other four. All tablets were pierced with iron nails, and recovered together *in situ*. Though curse tablets were compiled by both amateurs and specialists in Classical Athens, this cache was almost certainly composed by a professional as part of a larger binding ritual; this is suggested by the neat scribal hand, the eloquent text, and repeated phrases found across all tablets, which were deposited together as a group. Here we present ΜΠ 11948, offering this curse as a representative example of the other four, with only slight variations among them (the transcription is that of Lamont 2015: 162, but see too Petritaki 2009: 465, 2010: 707; Feyel 2010: 707; *SEG* XLVI 297; Chaniotis 2013: 288).

Piraeus Archaeological Museum Inv. 11948; Figure 1
Lead Tablet: H. 0.127m, W. 0.056m; c.400 BC

Bronze Nail: H. 0.03m, Nail Head Diameter: 0.015m

1 [Ἑκ]ά̣τη χθονία, Ἄρτεμι χθονία, Ἑρμῆ χθ̣όνιε,
2 ἐπιφθόνησον Φαναγόραι καὶ Δημητρίωι
3 καὶ τῶι καπηλείωι καὶ χρήμασι καὶ κτήμασι.
4 Δήσω τόγ γ' ἐμὸν ἐχθρὸν Δημήτριον καὶ Φανα-
5 γ̣όραν ἐν αἵματι καὶ κονίαισιν̣
6 σὺμ πᾶσιμ φθιμένοις. Ο<ὐ>δέ σε λύσε(ι) πρώτη πεν-
7 [θ]ετηρίς. Τοιο<ύ>τωι σ' ἐγὼ δήσω δεσμῶι,
8 [ὦ Δ]ημήτριιε, ὥσπερ κρατερώτατόν
9 [ἐστ]ι̣ν, γλώττει +δὲ+ κυνωτὸν ἐπεγκρο<ύ>σω̣.

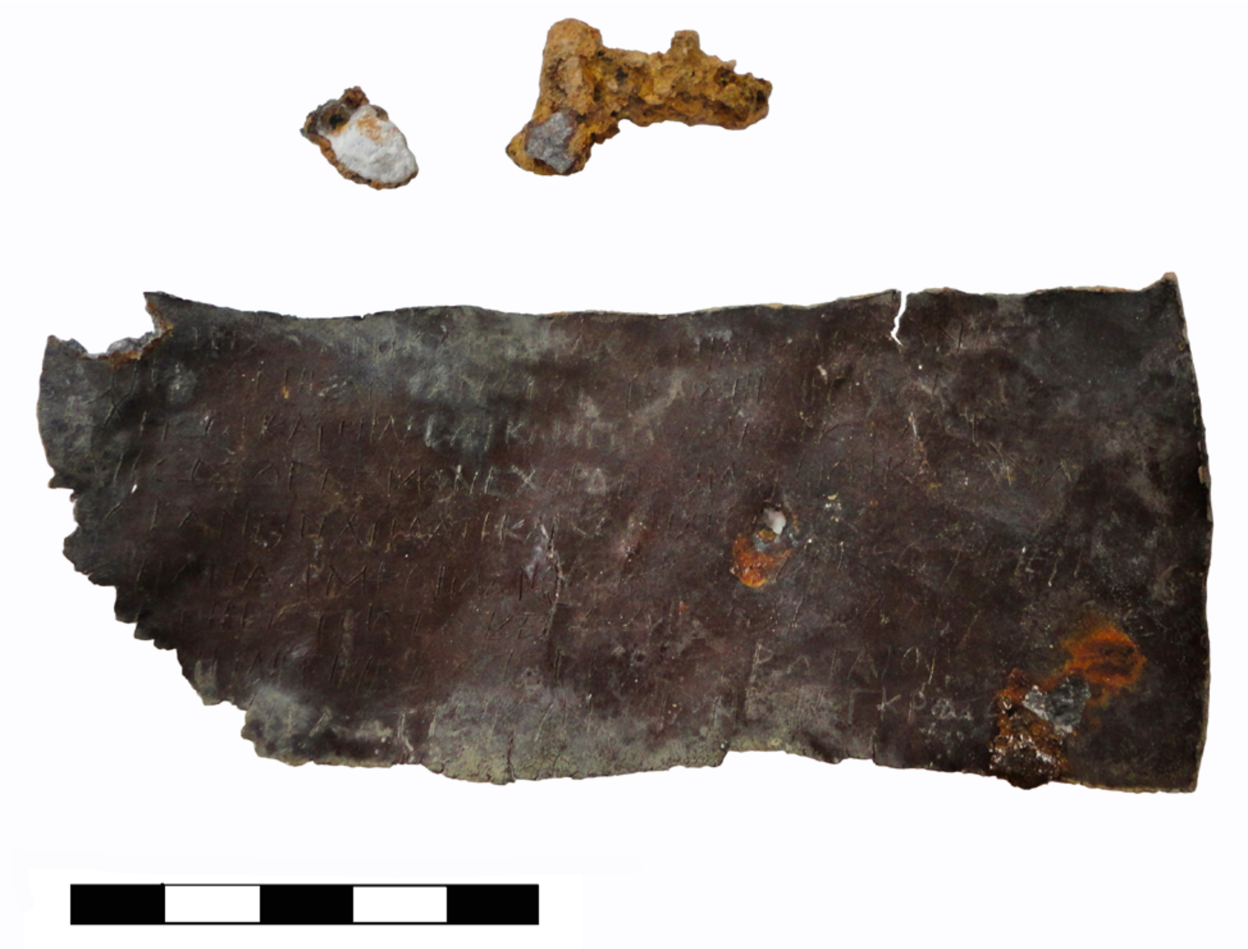

Figure 1. ΜΠ 11948, Lead κατάδεσμος found in rescue excavations at 131-137 Piraeus Street.

Translation:

1 Hekate Chthonia, Artemis Chthonia, Hermes Chthonios:
2 cast your hate upon Phanagora and Demetrios,
3 and their shop and their property and their possessions.
4 I bind my enemy Demetrios, and Phana-
5 gora, in blood and in ashes,
6 with all the dead. Nor will the next four-year cycle release you.
7 I bind you in such a bind,
8 Demetrios, as strong as is possible,
9 and into [your] tongue a *kynoton* I nail in.

In this tablet, along with the other incised narratives, the curser calls for the destruction of the wealth, property, and livelihoods of a flurry of people, all male-female pairs. These couples (with whom the curser seems intimately acquainted) posed a threat or risk that someone sought to control with a powerful troop of binding spells. In ΜΠ 11948 above, the targets are associated with a *kapeleion*, 'a tavern,' though this is also the more general term used for a 'commercial shop' or 'business.' We incline here toward the former meaning, as several contemporary literary sources associate the *kapelos* and *kapelis* with the serving of wine (Ar. *Thesm.* 347, *Plout.* 435-6, *Ecc.* 154, *Lys.* 427; Isoc. 7.49). The author specifies the name of the targeted male in this tablet and all others. The paired women, however, are treated with less consistency. In two tablets, the named man is paired with a named woman; in two others, the targeted man is coupled with an unnamed woman, specified only as his wife: Demetrios and Phanagora, Euthydemos and Krite, Euphilitos and his wife, and Kephisodotos and his wife. Kephisodotos' name should be kept in mind, as he will reemerge at the end of our study. Perhaps the named men were the primary targets of the curses, and the women coupled with them – sometimes named, sometimes not – served more as identifying agents to further describe the male victim, in lieu of a demotic or patronymic. It seems possible, however, that in ΜΠ 11948 the *kapeleion* was operated by a male-female pair (likely husband and wife).

Was the curser himself somehow involved in the world of the *kapeleion*? We have no way of knowing; perhaps the commissioner of these *katadesmoi* merely knew Demetrios and Phanagora as terribly rowdy neighbors. Various Attic curse tablets concern the world of the tavern, a venue that hosted a motley clientele, from travelers to prostitutes to gamblers (*DTA* 30, 68, 70, 75, 87). And so, if ΜΠ 11948 does stem from some squabble within the tavern, it keeps good company. The other tablets, however, relate in no obvious way to occupational or commercial matters, and here Eidinow's point about caution is well taken. As to the situation that triggered the curses, we can only responsibly conclude that we may never know with any certainty. What *does* seem striking, however, are the male-female couples that emerge across the tablets. Is this a significant clue to the situation or circumstances of the commissioner(s)?

While several aspects of this binding spell utilize vocabulary and formulae common to Attic curse tablets – the various forms of δέω, the targeting of the tongue, the invocation of underworld deities, etc. – some interesting and perhaps unexpected features emerge. The curse opens with a cast of 'chthonic' characters (l.1); Hekate, Artemis, and Hermes are invoked in their guise as subterranean deities. Hekate and Hermes are to be expected here, as liminal deities who regularly crossed between the underworld and mortal realms; both are commonly conjured in Attic *katadesmoi* (*NGCT* 2; *DTA* 105-107). Hekate received nighttime offerings at crossroads, while Hermes Chthonios received sacrifice on the *Chytroi* day of the Anthesteria festival – an unclean, sinister day on which spirits roamed, and temples were closed to prevent the intrusion of *miasma* (Parker 2005: 296, with schol. to Ar. *Plout.* 594; Dem. *Or.* 54.39; Plut. *Mor.* 708f; Apollod. *FGrHist* 244 F 110; that the Athenian shrine of Hekate Triglanthine may have been located in Xypete, see Athenaios 7.325d with Bicknell 1974: 336.) It is less common to find Artemis, a goddess associated with maturation rites and the protection of Athenian women and girls, in the more harmful context of ritualized binding. By way of the 'chthonia' epithet, the tablets likely invoke Artemis' mercurial, destructive side, which was linked with the realm of the sinister and the threatening. It was perhaps fused, to some extent, with the figure of Hekate; *IG* I^3 383.124-129 shows that the two deities had indeed coalesced in Attica by the 5th century BC.

The tablet's unique vocabulary also invites discussion. The term πεντετηρίς (ll. 6-7), for example, is unknown in other *katadesmoi.* This word likely refers to a set period of four years (literally 'five' for the Greeks, who counted inclusively), and in Classical Athens was employed in the public sphere in relation to athletic and religious festivals – such as the Olympic or Panathenaic cycle games – and terms of public office associated with them (Lyc. 1, 102; Aristot. *Pol.* 1308b; Plut. *Mor.* 841b). It is striking that the narrative includes a limit to the binding (πρώτη πεντετηρίς), and does so in language drawn from civic terminology (see the later *IG* XIV 1048b.7, where the context of εἰς ἐνιαυτόν is unclear due to the tablet's broken edge, and the 'Sethian' *DT* 155, where εἴσω ἡμερῶν πέντε references the time in which Kardelos was to die an 'evil death', rather than the duration of binding). A curse tablet from Pantikapaion on the Black Sea was also concerned with the limit or period of the binding: *SGD* 170 urges – implores – against the spell's release, even in the event that the very gods and *daimones* invoked in the curse are offered μηρία, savory sacrifices of thigh meat (*SGD* 170, Col. B ll. 4-9). This leaves us with the possibility that πεντετηρίς leached into these spells from the realm of civic festivals, Attic or Panhellenic, or rotating terms of public office associated with the Athenian democracy. Echoes of civic or legal language throughout these tablets could have bolstered the bindings with an air of authority, though possibly these formulae were influenced by (and indeed, developed alongside) the growing use of writing in legal, commercial, and other municipal contexts.

The difficult transcription of ΟΔΕΣΕΛΥΣΕ as Ο<ὐ>δέ σε λῦσε(ι) is here preferred to other possibilities (Lamont 2015: 162), which might include οὐδέ σ᾽ ἔλυσε (as a gnomic aorist), οὗ δέ σε λύσει, ὅ δ<ῆ>σε λῦσε<ι> ('the first four-year cycle will release that [curse] which bound'), or ὅδε σ' ἔλυσε (Feyel 2010: 223, n.2, which is nonsensical as the clause's subject must be πρώτη πεντετηρίς, the only nominative feminine form; see too *SEG* 57.297, with Matthaiou's objection). It is also possible that this portion of the curse is intentionally ambiguous and meant to elude clear definition. Magical formulae often prefer the *lectio difficilior* – the more aberrant and abnormal a reading, the more appealing its use within a censured, taboo ritual context (Versnel 2002: 142). Perhaps this phrase was not meant to be understood in a textual framework, but rather as an utterance or string of sounds intended for use in spoken, enacted ritual; like the spell, the very language of the curse was tortuous, bound up in itself, and not meant for immediate semantic unlocking. Striking too is the repetition of dentals (deltas) in lines 7-8, δήσω δεσμῷ | [Δ]ημήτριε, and velars (kappas, chi) in line 3, καὶ τῷ καπηλείῳ καὶ χρήμασι καὶ κτήμασι; this consonantal repetition gives the curse an incantatory, chant-like dissonance, as Versnel has shown is significant in spells and charms (2002).

Additional aspects of the binding narrative are unusual, and might be explained in relation to the ritual – graveside or otherwise – that accompanied the cursing process. For example, the act of binding Demetrios and Phanagora 'in blood and in ashes' could point to the presence or use of both organic materials within the binding ritual. Was blood offered to the dead, perhaps as some sort of libation? Alternatively, this hexametrical phrase may have held more poetic than ritual significance; ἐν αἵματι καὶ κονίαισιν̣ occurs in the grimmest passages of Homeric epic, such as the suitor scene in Book 22 of the *Odyssey* (22.383-386), as well as in the *Iliad* (16.796), where αἵματι καὶ κονίῃσι are paired as two agents that defile and stain the armor of Achilles, just before the death of Patroklos. Was the scribe consciously employing epic verse for supernatural pursuits? In later centuries, short bits of text were excerpted from Homeric epic and used in incantations, spells, and amulets, though usually for protective or curative purposes (Collins 2008: 211-236). One wonders instead whether the text preserves hexametric verse from an earlier, oral tradition of binding (Lamont, *forthcoming*).

Perhaps most puzzling is the penultimate word κυνωτόν, a literal translation of which might be 'dog's ear.' Acts of cursing certainly employed exotic organic materials, such as fish, birds, a snake's tooth, a wolf's beard, a powdered lizard, and even the eyes of a bat (Apul. *Apol.* 1.3; Hor. *Sat.* 1.8; Theocr. *Id.* 2; *PGM* IV); the tool-kits of *goetes* and kindred practitioners were wondrous and macabre. It is also possible that this term comes from the world of gambling, as a contemporary fragment of the playwright Euboulos mentions κυνωτός as the name for a throw of dice, the lowest possible roll at that (Eub. 57). Yet another possibility is that this term betrays a ritual that took place during the graveside deposition of the tablets; it could indicate a throw of the dice, or *astragaloi*, during the binding process. Or perhaps it signifies something else entirely, an unparalleled but colloquial term for a type of nail, for example.

In sum, the curse tablet transcribed above and the others with which it was buried exhibit extremely similar binding spells. They invoke a triad of chthonic deities, and employ a sophisticated and specialized 'binding' vocabulary. That similar constructions emerge in contemporary tablets from Sicily and Macedonia – three disparate parts of the Greek world – suggests a corpus of shared traditions used in the trafficking of supernatural materials. This circulation speaks to communities, however small and specialized, well-versed in ritual binding. Yet this new cache also uses terms without parallel, many of which are unique in the Attic curse corpora; the distinct, highly literate (almost literary) language and snatches of dactylic hexameter suggest the involvement of a ritual specialist, with a practiced hand to boot.

Curses and cults in Xypete

The third and final part of this chapter aims to contextualize these *katadesmoi* within the community in which they were cast, and to recreate the more public aspects of ritual practice within what was likely the Classical deme of Xypete. What were the prominent public cults, *temene*, and rituals in Xypete, the community from which the tablets derived? Evidence is collated from a constellation of sources, including recent rescue excavations within the region. A complex landscape emerges, one rich in local shrines and sanctuaries: temples to Kybele (two), Herakles, Hera, a shrine sacred to Echelos and various other divinities, along with a precinct tied to the worship of Dionysos. Also important within this region were the Long Walls and Athens' hippodrome, in addition to the sprawling cemetery in which the curses were found. By reconstructing the built environment of this understudied deme, it is possible to elucidate the public rituals that occurred alongside more private acts of cursing.

The deme of Xypete was located alongside the Long Walls just northeast of the Piraeus, in the modern Aghios Ioannis Rentis-Moschato area (Figure 2). The region encompassed agricultural lands and estates, shrines, temples, cemeteries, and farmsteads. It was also demographically diverse; Xypete contained some 'city' residences of the prominent Alkmaeonid *genos*, as well as the slaves owned by them, and likely commercial shops like that of Demetrios and Phanagora (Dem. 47.52-3; Bicknell 1974: 336; Raftopoulou 2013: 53). The region's heterogeneity is further reflected in the Attic Stelai of 415 BC which, in auctioning-off property in Xypete, record the presence and sale of one Scythian and three Thracian slaves (*IG* I^3 422.187-200). The area thus housed members of Athens' wealthiest family, along with farmers, shop-keepers, metics, and slaves.

The Long Walls were also a prominent part of the built landscape. Their construction in the early 5th century would have spliced, partitioned, and restructured space within the community, and created a peripheral boundary against which more centralized areas came to be defined. Like the temple of Hera in Xypete, discussed further below, the Long Walls served as architectural monuments of communal experience and collective memory: they were constructed in the wake of (and arguably in response to) the Persian Wars, and paralleled the rise of Athenian hegemony in the Delian League and subsequent *arche*. During the Peloponnesian War they sheltered the Athenians who relocated from the countryside under Perikles' policy of defensive non-engagement (Thuc. 1.143; 2.13.2; 2.55), and were then partially torn down following Athens' defeat at the end of the 5th century. They were then rebuilt in the 390s, during the so-called Kononian phase of construction (Conwell 2008: 93-131). Sharing the same ebbs and flows of fortune, the Long Walls paralleled Athens' own wartime fate, if in microcosm. They played a prominent role in defining the region's built environment throughout the Classical period, and in folding the fortunes of the local deme community into that of the larger polis – politically, militarily, or otherwise. Cemeteries, as civic 'dead space,' clustered

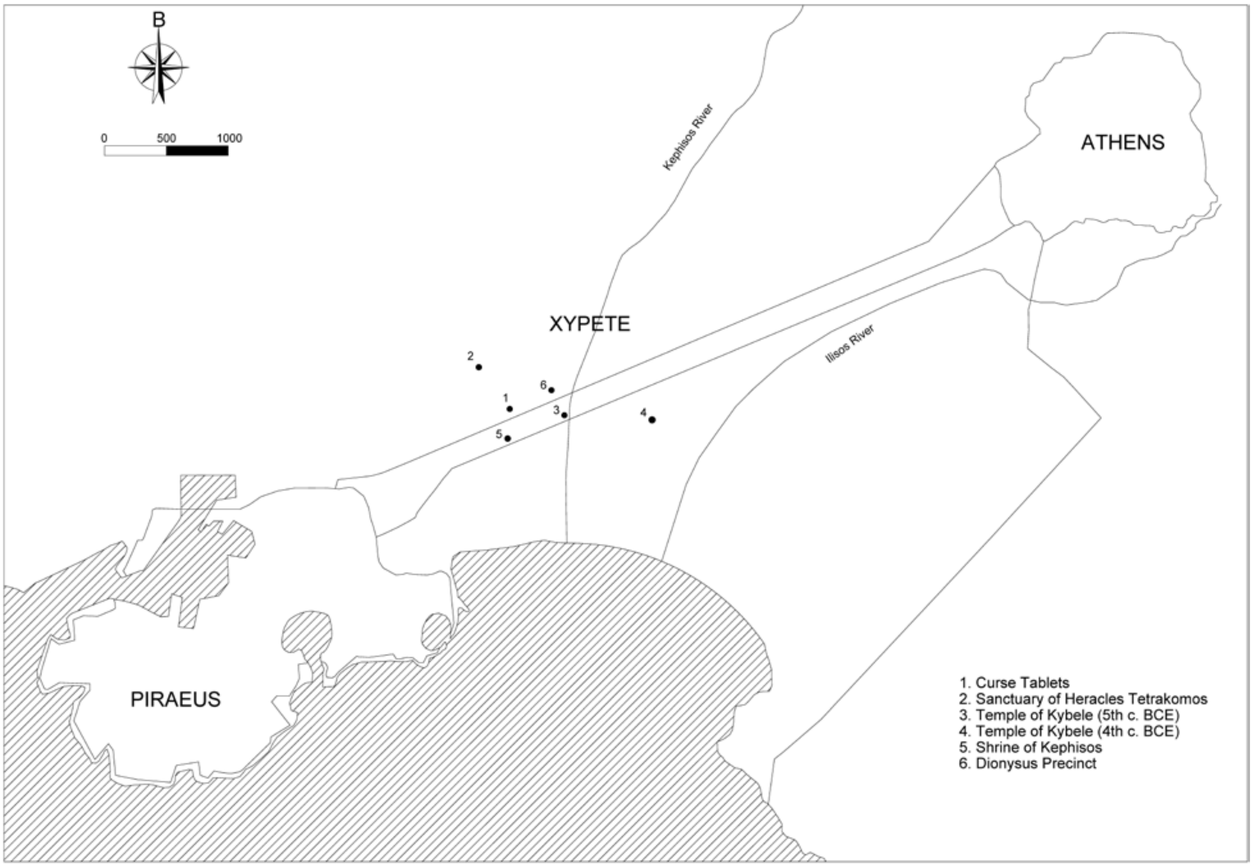

Figure 2. Map of the Athenian plain.

alongside the region immediately outside the Long Walls (map in Petritaki 2009: 474-475). The cemetery in which the curse tablets were deposited was a liminal setting; it was connected to yet apart from the living deme community.

This landscape was also dappled with shrines and temples. Xypete bordered Phaleron to the east, Thymaitadai to the west, and Piraeus to the south; these demes were in close association with one another, and together comprised the τετράκωμοι based at a regional sanctuary of Herakles. Though the *Tetrakomoi* had been split and re-combined into three different *trittyes* under the Kleisthenic reforms, they still maintained an integrated communal identity in certain cult-centers and festivals (Whitehead 1986). It is possible that shrines in this region – as well as cemeteries – were utilized by individuals from across these four districts, and that a broader *Tetrakomoi*-based identity persevered alongside that of each individual deme. This can be glimpsed in terms of regional festivals, as noted above. Residents of Xypete participated in a festival shared and maintained by the *Tetrakomoi,* which was based at the sanctuary of Herakles (Figure 2; Rhodes 2004: 211). The festival featured athletic and musical competitions. The Herakleion serving these four demes has yielded votive reliefs, inscriptions, and sculptural fragments; rectangular foundations from the Classical temple were also reportedly uncovered near the church of Zoodochos Pigi in Aghios Ioannis Rentis (*IG* II^2 3102-3104; Papagiannopoulos-Palaios 1958-1959: 62-64). It may have assumed the form of a four-columned Herakleion, examples of which are known from vase painting and sculpture (Frickenhaus 1911: 121-131; Woodford 1971: 213). Notions of identity, then, were textured and multivalent within this small Attic community.

Those living and working in Xypete would also have visited the roadside temple of Hera, which was burned by Mardonios' troops during the Persian invasion of 480 BC and deliberately left thereafter in a state of ruin. A monument to war, loss and, ultimately, Greek victory, its violation served as a reminder of the Persian Wars, and still in Pausanias' day had neither door nor roof (Paus. 1.1.5; 10.35.2). Like other temples of the late Archaic period, the temple of Hera in Xypete would have been one of the most vibrant and substantial structures in the landscape; it served as a locus of ritual, and displayed dedications from previous decades if not centuries. In its dilapidated state, the structure was a repository of communal memory and experience (Miles 2014: 121). However, during the Classical period and later, the temple was never disregarded or ignored; rather, it accumulated monetary dedications, and received a cult statue by the prominent 5th century sculptor

Alkamenes (*IG* I^3 383.65: 855 drachmas, one obol in 429 BC; Paus. 1.1.5; Johnson 1929: 401). It thus continued as a site of active worship, while also recalling a shared Attic past at the hands of Persian invaders. In this way, the local community subsumed and celebrated notions of Panhellenic, Pan-Attic, *Tetrakomoi*-based, and Xypete (deme) centered identities through local sanctuaries and ritual practice.

This small region also hosted two sanctuaries of Kybele. Recently uncovered by rescue excavations in the Moschato area, the earlier sanctuary has been dated to the late 6th or early 5th century BC; it comprised a polygonal peribolos wall, as well as interior and exterior walls of limestone (Petritaki 2009: 469). Discoveries within the temenos were striking, and included dedicatory statues and bases, *naiskoi* with and without statues, statuettes, and figurines; one particularly lavish dedication, a statue of Kybele herself, was dedicated by Hipparete, perhaps a relative of *the* Hipparete, wife of Alkibiades (Petritaki 2013: 201-202). This early Kybele sanctuary was abandoned at the end of the 5th century BC, perhaps in connection with destructions of the Peloponnesian War; it is thus significantly earlier than another Kybele temple unearthed during the 1970s, which was established in the 4th century BC only 700 meters east of this earlier one (Figure 2; Papachristodoulou 1973: 189-217). That these two sanctuaries were built so close to one another suggests that this area was important for the early Attic worship of Kybele, a goddess with ties to the east. Xypete's location along the southern Long Walls likely appealed to the large number of foreigners and metics in the greater port region, many of whom engaged in commerce and, from this area, would have had ready access to both the Agora and Piraeus. The prominence of Kybele in Xypete beginning in the late Archaic period could reflect the presence of easterners, perhaps Phrygians in particular, within the communities bordering the ports at Piraeus.

Significant, too, in reconstructing the cultic landscape of Xypete is an intriguing precinct of Dionysos, recently uncovered during rescue excavations in modern Aghios Ioannis Rentis (Figure 2; Syropoulos 2013: 59, Figure 4). The *temenos* is quite near the earlier sanctuary of Kybele, and was likely active during the Classical period, even if an Archaic kantharos sherd inscribed ΤΟ ΔΙΟΝΥΣ allows us to raise the date slightly (Syropoulos 2013: 64, but with no posited chronology). The new precinct is not small in size (19.65 m. x 13.40 m.), and is oriented SSW to NNE. It consists of a square courtyard bound by divided rooms and stoas on the north, south, and west sides. Syropoulos notes that the middle room on the northern side has the characteristics of an *andron*: it is rectangular in shape, with stone benches running along the long sides (2013: 59); perhaps it was used for Dionysiac cult rites or symposia. The stoas on the southern and western sides of the complex each communicate with a smaller room on one end, as well as the courtyard by way of colonnades. The structure also contained a 'deposition pit' cut into the walkway between the building and its enclosure wall; within the pit were found numerous fragments of drinking vessels, including the incised Dionysos kantharos sherd noted above (Syropoulos 2013: 59). Syropoulos suggests that the earliest cult activity was based around this pit, and that it involved rites associated with the worship of Dionysos. As the cult grew in popularity, a proper structure was then built around the pit to accommodate more worshippers. He also notes that the building may have been owned by a *thiasos*, which performed ritual symposia there (Syropoulos 2013: 64); on what basis is unclear, however, and *thiasoi* are generally understood to have been institutions of the later Classical period. Could this have been a structure associated with local Dionysiac rites, or could it have housed the Rural Dionysia? As with the recently uncovered Kybele sanctuary, it is hoped that the proper publication of this precinct might answer such questions and provide new inroads for future research.

The deme of Xypete also contained within it a district known as Echelidai, which housed Athens' hippodrome, an open-air facility four stades long. Chariot and horse racing competitions, such as those held at the Panathenaia, would have brought crowds of spectators, athletes, vendors, animals, and more to Xypete, swelling the deme's population during certain times of the year. This district was named after Echelos, a shadowy local hero about which little is known (Traill 1975: 87, 114; Kyle 1993: 96-7; Ferguson 1938: 25-26; Xen. *Hipp.* 3.10; *Etym. Magn.* s.v. Ἐνεχελιδώ, Ἔχελος; Photius, s.v. Ἐχελιδῶν; Hesychius, s.v. ἐν Ἐχελιδῶν). Echelos has left an iconographic footprint however, appearing as the subject of an interesting late 5th century BC votive relief dedicated to Hermes and the Nymphs. The relief was discovered *in situ* within an intramural shrine near the river Kephissos. The shrine appears to have lodged several heroes, local and 'rustic' in character, such as Kephissos, Echelos, and the Nymphs (Figure 3; Athens NM nos. 1783, 2756; *IG* II^2 4546, 4548; Staes 1909: 242, Pl.2; Vikela 1997: 223). The Echelos relief has been dated stylistically to around 400 BC, and depicts the local hero seizing the nymph Iasile in a chariot led by Hermes (*IG* I^3 986A-B; *CEG* 2.749; Athens NM 1783). Along with the contemporary relief of Xenokrateia, which commemorates the very foundation of the same sanctuary to the river god Kephissos (by Xenokrateia herself, intriguingly: 'Ξενοκράτεια Κηφισô ἱερ|ὸν ἱδρύσατο' *IG* II^2 4548.1-2; Athens NM 2756), the Echelos relief was found in close proximity to the grave in which the cache of curse tablets was deposited (Figure 2). Furthermore, the Echelos relief was offered by a man named Kephisodotos, who claims to have dedicated the altar within the shrine of Kephissos, his namesake deity (*IG* I^3 986 A.1-3: Κηφισόδοτος Δεμογένος | Βουτάδες ἱδρύσατο | καὶ τὸν βωμόν). Kephisodotos' establishment

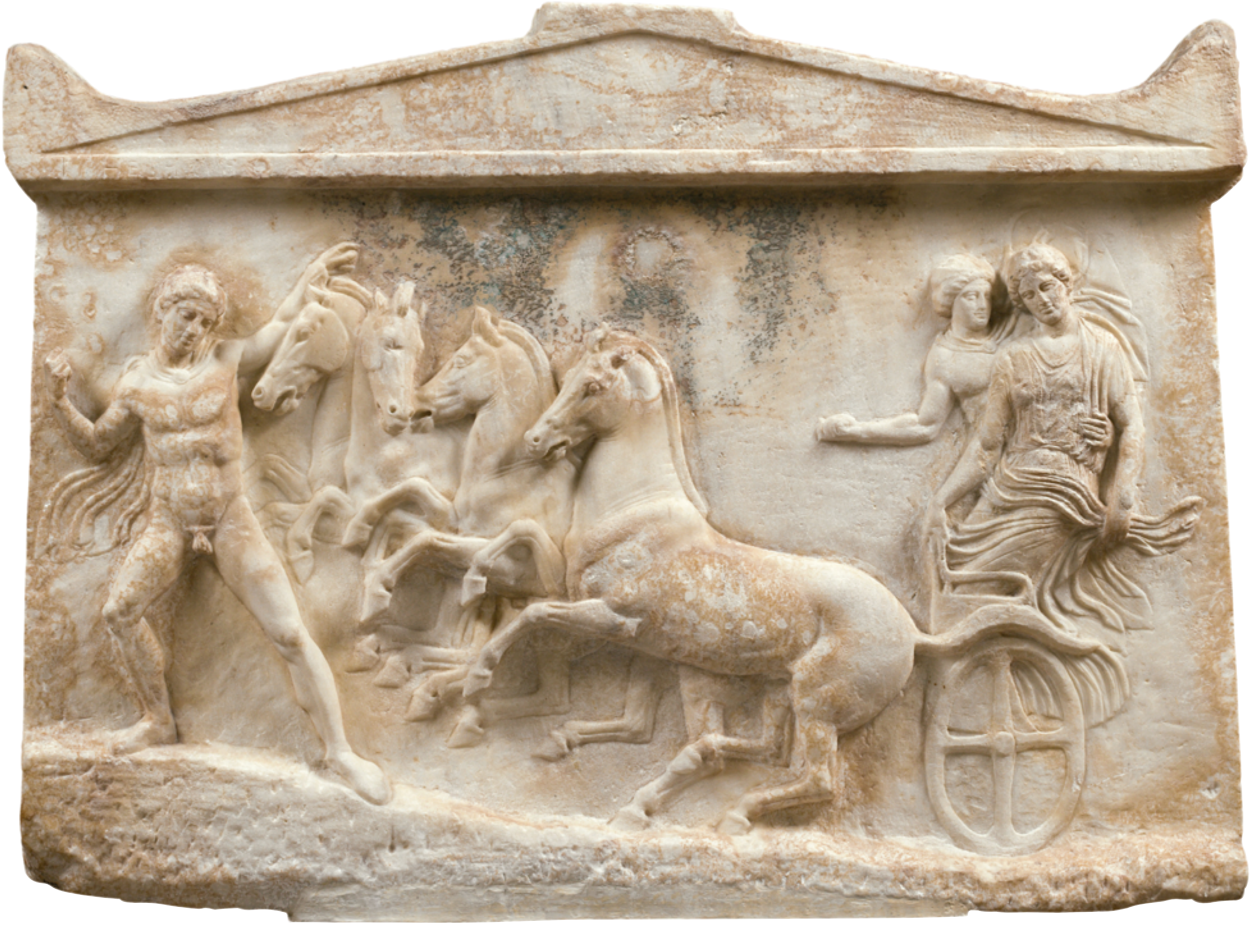

Figure 3. Votive relief depicting the abduction of Nymph Iasile by the hero Echelos: Athens NM 1783, 2756; *IG* II^2 4546, 4548. National Archaeological Museum, Athens. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports /Archaeological Receipts Fund.

of an altar to Kephissos – in addition to a lavish, opisthographic dedication – betrays his success, activity, and visibility within the local community, in which he possibly lived or worked during the final years of the Peloponnesian War. The foundation of the altar was surely intended to secure a favorable relationship with the shrine's deities, and it provided Kephisodotos with a degree of prominence within the local community. This precinct must have been an especially popular place of worship during the late Peloponnesian War, when citizens of rural Attica again gathered within the sanctum of the Long Walls (Voutyras 2011: 53-54). Upon Kephisodotos' altar, citizens, women, slaves, and metics would have sacrificed and worshipped, while simultaneously commemorating and acknowledging the altar's patron. In contrast to the private, furtive rituals employed nearby during the cursing process, these *public* displays of religiosity celebrated local heroes and divinities, along with members of the community.

This brings us, finally, back to our cache of curses, deposited in a grave on the outskirts of the deme in the earliest years of the 4th century BC. Can this be the same Kephisodotos as is targetted on the contemporary curse tablet, deposited so near to this altar? Although the name is quite a common one, and prosopography a dangerous game, it is certainly an attractive possibility, and at the very least the two overlapped in both time and space. If it is indeed the same individual, then here we have a case in which Hermes was *publically* worshipped by Kephisodotos, as shown by the votive relief, yet also *privately* invoked to curse Kephisodotos mere meters away. The duality of Hermes – worshipped by Kephisodotos, yet also invoked in his chthonic guise to curse him – reveals the beautiful malleability and the protean nature of Greek gods and heroes. It also demonstrates the numerous ways in which ritual could function within a local Attic community. Rather than serving as stable carriers of meaning, the lead tablets, nails, organic materials, and oral recitations involved in the binding process can be best understood as dynamic ritual processes, in which both the narrative and the object actively shape and were shaped by the local communities and ritual landscapes in which they circulated.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to reconstruct the ways in which personal ritual functioned at the local deme level in Classical Attica. From the chthonic deities invoked in private binding curses to the public cults of Hera, Herakles, Echelos, Kephissos, and others, a thriving and multivalent religious community comes into focus. In Athens, curse tablets were used by and against a wide spectrum of society. An examination of ΜΠ 11948, a new curse tablet discovered in a cache with four others in a Classical cemetery, suggests that the act of binding could entail creating a lead tablet, inscribing a text upon it, performing other rites probably oral or ephemeral in nature, and finally, depositing one or several objects within a grave or other subterranean locale. The rituals associated with cursing (oral, performative, or otherwise) formed vital parts of the binding process. The incised lead tablets, the liminal, impure setting of the cemetery, and the specialized speech acts – tied together through ritual praxis – set this rite apart from those found in the realm of civic religion. The public cults of Xypete and neighboring demes provide a backdrop against which to contextualize the private act of cursing; public rites within the deme, including the private foundation of public cults, further illuminate personal ritual practices within this small community. Such interdisciplinary approaches can offer localized 'snapshots' of private religious ritual in and around the deme of Xypete, against the backdrop of highly visible civic religion at the turn of the 5th century BC.

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Cursing rituals as part of household cult: a fourth century BC inscribed bowl from Salamis

Yannis Chairetakis

Rescue excavations at Ambelaki on Salamis (Figure 1), where the ancient city on the island is situated, have revealed extensive remains of the city, i.e. the fortification wall, workshops and houses, which offer important information both for the organization of the settlement and for the ritual practices that took place in different time periods. In a domestic context, several practices related to birth, death or marriage are recognized, as well as practices related to invoking chthonic deities, as regards the protection from the *miasma*, or even to harm other people. The aim of this paper is to present an inscribed clay bowl, the text of which is associated with the texts listed on defixiones and is addressed to the gods of the Underworld in order to 'bind' and cause harm to the inscribed.

By the middle of the 5th century BC the town had a fortification wall encircling the bay of Ambelaki (Figure 2). The temples of Artemis (Hdt. 8.77) and Bendis are located on the top of Pounta peninsula, while Agora and the temple of Ajax (Paus. I 35.3) are in the – now sunken – central part of the bay of Ambelaki. Houses occupy the southern slope of Pounta peninsula, and successive phases of occupation, or devastations of others, often led to the rejection of waste material in wells or large pits. In such a pit in Zougris' plot (Chairetakis 2011), the inscribed clay bowl was found (Figures 3-5). The black-glazed bowl with a ring base and incurved rim is the product of an Attic workshop with typological parallels in the Athenian Agora, dated between 325-300 BC (Rotroff 1997: nos 974-975). The interior surface is decorated with four 16-petaled palmettes, while after being fired, the inscriptions were etched (Figure 5). The presence of names among these inscriptions facilitated the interpretation of the inscribed bowl as a device for defixiones. The use of pottery sherds or vases for the function of magic is less common, as most defixiones are written on lead tablets. Only few examples on clay items are known, on pottery sherds in Olbia in the Black Sea (Lebedev 1996a; b), on bolsal-cups in Chalkis, Euboea (Papavasileiou 1902; 1907; Chairetakis 2015: 40) and on a lamp in Athens (Mastrocinque 2007: 88-89). A skyphos

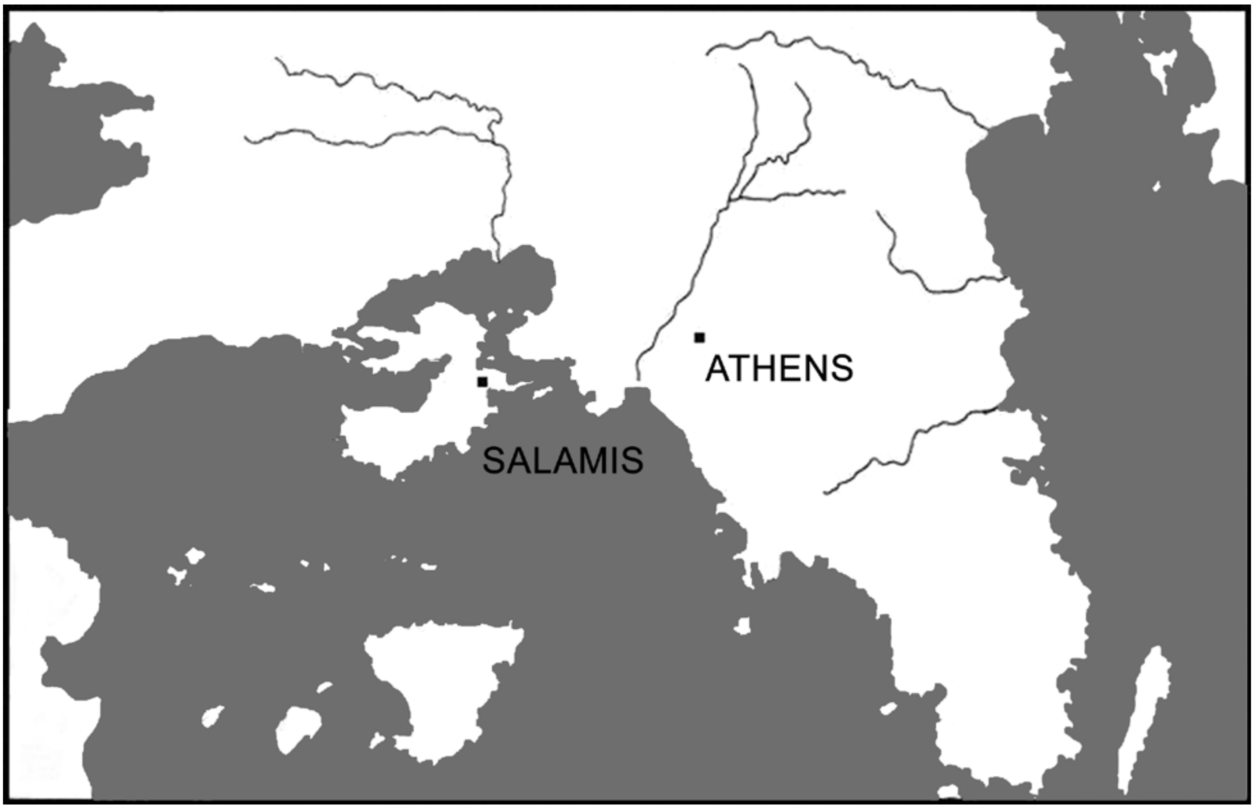

Figure 1. Map of Attica and Salamis.

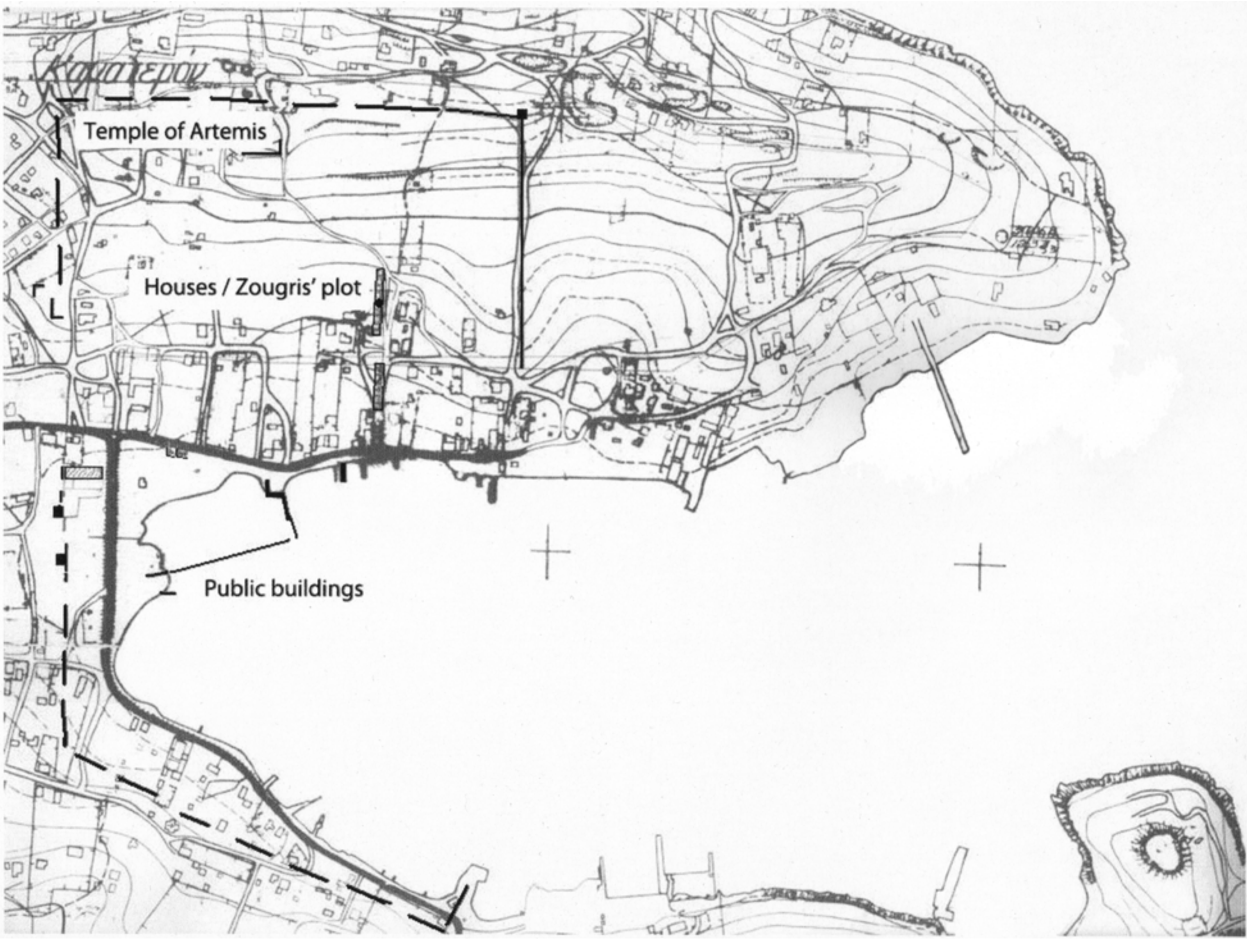
Temple of Artemis
Houses / Zougris' plot
Public buildings

Figure 2. Ambelaki on Salamis. Topographic map of the ancient city.

from Kephisia, Attica (Matthaiou 2016) seems to belong to the same group, as I believe. Other ingredients for defixiones are beeswax, copper and papyrus (Faraone 1991: 7; Graf 1997: 167).

The inscription on the Salamis' bowl can be divided into three groups based on the space they occupy:

Group A
Ο]ΓΑΡΑΓΑΙΗΣ
<Μ>[.....]ΠΗ
ΗΑΡΙΣΟΤΜΜΑΧΟΣ
Group B
ΜΥ[......]Υ ΦΑΙΝΙΠΗΣ
...]ΣΤΟΜΙΕ[....
Group C
ΧΟΙΝΙΑΔΟ

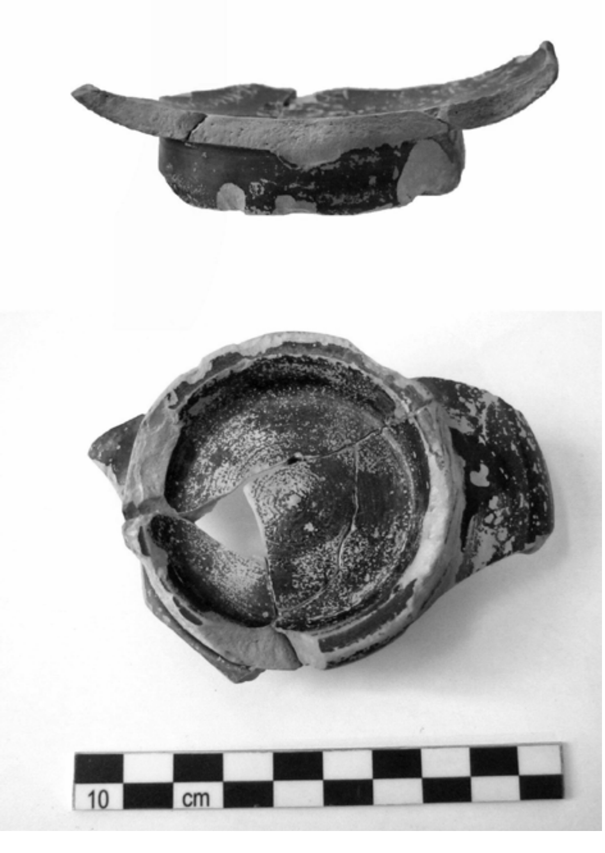

Figure 3. The Salamis bowl.

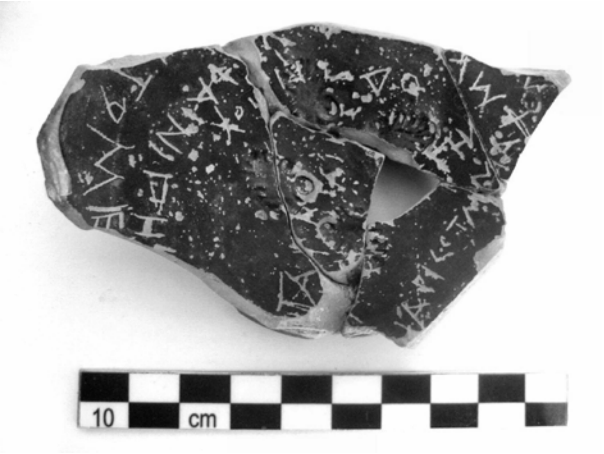

Figure 4. The inscriptions on the Salamis bowl.

The first group includes three verses. The first verse contains ten letters, but we rarely find a parallel long name or demotic with suffix in –αιης. Here, after the necessary adjustments and corrections, three words are proposed to be read. The first letter is probably an -O, while the rest can be read as παρά γαίης. Preposition παρὰ is common on defixiones. Curbera and Jordan (1998: 215) have examined defixiones with the prepositions πρὸς and παρὰ, which are accompanied by names of chthonic deities or terms related to them. Some of their examples are: παρὰ Φερσεφόνει καὶ Ἑρμεῖ, παρὰ θεῶν καὶ πα<ρ>' ἡρώων, παρὰ τοῖς ἠϊθέοις, πὰρ Ἡρμᾶι, παρὰ καταχθονίοισι θεοῖσι. According to the aforementioned scholars these examples indicate the need for placement of defixiones with the help of the listed names/deities next to them, namely in certain places. In the case of Salamis' bowl, the meaning of the first verse is that of the placement 'in the bowels of the earth'. Besides, invoking the Earth for help is common in defixiones. Concerning the first word of this verse, a verb such as καταδῶ is possible, although the space is too short. This phrase has the role of introducing the magic text, as we find in other defixiones before a list of names, as for example in Attica, καταδίδημι τούτους ἅπαν[τα]ς and τούτους ἅπαντας καταδῶ (*IG* III App. 42) and in Pydna καταδεσσμεύω τὰς γλώσσας (Curbera and Jordan 2002-2003: 122-124). Below the introductory sentence on the Salamis' bowl there are two names. The first could be completed by the name Μνησίππη and the second to be corrected as Ἀριστόμαχος. The nominative case of the second name identifies that of the first. Both names are common in Attica (Traill 1994-2011: 421-422, 172-179), and any hope in linking them with known persons is lessened by the lack of patronymics.

The second group on the opposite side of the bowl bears part of a name beginning with the letters MY... and ending in -Y and a second one, that of Φαινί(π)πης in the same row. This verse has the particularity of continuous recording in a row of two names with a small gap between them. The most likely scenario is that due to lack of space in the bowl, the two names were put in the same row, a phenomenon known also in defixiones. Although in those cases the record is usually continuous, few examples bear a gap between names, while some others are separated by a colon (*IG* III3 51, 77, 117). The first name could be completed by the name Μυρωνίδης in genitive. Myron or Myronides may complement a name mentioned in an inscription of land leases from Salamis dated in the first half of the 4th century BC (*IG* II^2 1590a) and Myronides on the Salamis bowl may have some affinity with the former. The name of Phainippe is known in Attica and Salamis, and Phainippe on the Salamis' bowl can be identified with the wife of Smikythion and sister of Kleo, all mentioned on a grave stele from Salamis, dated after the mid-4th century BC (*IG* II^2 12849). If these records concern the same woman, we have for the first time a double recording of a person in Salaminian prosopography. The case that Φαινί(π)πης is the metronymic of Myronides must be excluded, because all such examples of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC bear an article before the mother's name and do not reflect magical use, as later examples of the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, which have Egyptian influences (Curbera 1999: 200-201). Under these names, part of a third name weathers, which could be completed by the male names Ἀριστομήδης or Ἀριστομέδων in genitive, names which, however, are not frequent, or even Ἀριστομένης (Traill 1994-2011: 179-185).

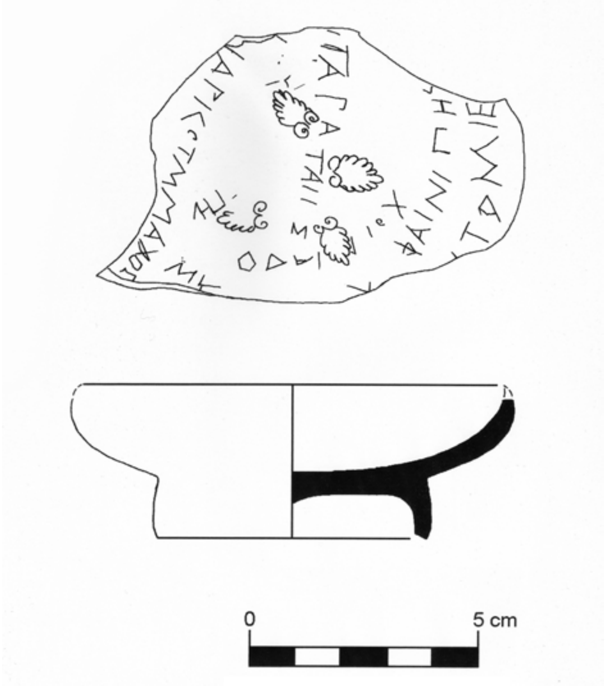

Figure 5. The Salamis bowl, drawing.

The third group, between the other two on the bowl, includes a name that could be corrected in Χιονίδης or Χιωνίδης, in genitive. The name is very common in various parts of the Greek world, and also in Athens of the 4th century BC (Traill 1994-2011: 379-380), where it is also referred to as a slave name (Vlassopoulos 2010, 143; *IG* III App. 82.) After all these corrections we could read on the Salamis' bowl the following text:

–ω] παρὰ γαίης
Μ[νησίπ]πη
Ἀριστόμαχος
Μυ[ρωνίδο]υ Φαινί(π)πης
[Ἀρι]στομή[δου]
Χιωνίδο(υ)

In the inscriptions on the Salamis' bowl, the spelling is distorted and faulty, facts common in defixiones, as writers are usually non-professional curse-writers. The inverted spelling or distorted writing are indications of a device known as sympathetic or analogical magic. Distorted name means distorted holder. The different form of genitives in the completed name Μυ[ρωνίδο]υ in -[O]Y and in the name Χιωνίδο(υ) in -O, is interesting. Compensatory lengthening, the use of -O instead of -OY, is common during the first half of the 4th century BC and is displayed only in few examples during the third quarter of the 4th century BC (Pologiorghi 2002: 199). Similarly, a letter, such as the sigma, may be written differently. In the case of the name Aristomachos an open four-barred Σ and a wedge-shaped lunate sigma are used. The simultaneous display of different forms of the letter is recognized in other defixiones too, and it seems that the lunate sigma is gaining ground in informal texts during the 4th century BC (Jordan and Rotroff 1999: 150). The form of letters and the possible identification of Phainippe with that on the grave stele from Salamis contribute to the dating of the inscriptions to the last quarter of the 4th century BC, i.e. the period to which the bowl is dated too.

Let us now turn to the different cases. In the first group the two names are in nominative, a case common in lists of names, although when there is a verb, like κατατίθημι, παραδίδωμι or καταγράφω the names are usually followed in the accusative. In the other two groups the names are in genitive, implying a phrase with syntax in genitive. The defixio from Pydna (Curbera and Jordan 2002-2003: 122) is a good example, where after the initial sentence καταδεσσμεύω τὰς γλώσσας the names are followed in genitive. A defixio with different cases in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens offers a similar example (Jordan and Curbera 2008). After the title καταδῶ, κατορύττω, ἀφανίζω ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, 111 names are followed in accusative and nominative form, due to a mistake of the writer. A similar case is possible for the Salamis' bowl, though there are only six names in comparison to the aforementioned example. Furthermore, one could support that the difference in genitives may be due to general unfamiliarity or lack of knowledge of the writer of the change in writing. However, another hypothesis could be formulated. It is generally accepted that the defixiones are the product of an individual against a rival, but some of them are the result of a group of people or a family against another group or family. There are several examples where defixiones assail against spouses, children, relatives, slaves, assets, workshops etc (Eidinow 2011: 21; Faraone 2008: 220). So, we must take into consideration whether different individuals from a group or a family wrote on the Salamis' bowl one or two names of a neighbouring group or family, with the aim of binding them. This possibility could explain the grammatical differences mentioned above.

Finding the Salamis bowl in a space associated with residential structures clearly defines the target of the writers, who must be an adjacent family. Magic as part of household worship is known. Plato (Lg. 10.909b-c) argues against magic and refers to practices associated with witchcraft, which were held at homes, and for this reason he proposes the abolition of private sanctuaries. He says, indeed, that especially women and the sick of all kinds, who fall short of intelligence and thought, are prone to those, who by paying, promise to persuade the gods to cast spells, not only on individuals, but also on entire families and nations. In the context of the practices associated with the function of a house, practices of binding are associated not only with individuals with blood ties – spouses, children, siblings – but additionally with those related to financial terms, as slaves. Faraone (2008: 221) argues that the main reason of binding within the household worship has a financial background.

Although many scholars maintain that the practice of binding is the result of individuals in a domestic context and does not belong to the sphere of collegiality, as required in the formal religion, the boundaries between household cult and polis religion are not so clear. Household cult and polis religion are interdependent and in recent decades the issue of identifying the boundaries between formal religion expressed by the institutions of a city and worship in a tight frame of a house has been addressed. As analyzed by Eidinow (2011: 23-24), the practice of binding was conceived and realized in the context of the city, from people who live in this city, with regulations and obligations, and therefore official religion and household worship are terms somehow intertwined. It is also a fact that the practice of binding is prevalent in all layers of society, and this procedure was not unknown or secret. We must always keep in mind the defixiones associated with the law courts.

Given the focus of this essay on the interpretation of the Salamis bowl, we have to identify the location where the bowl was placed. The first verse mentions the necessity of deposition in the bowels of the earth, but this is not enough. Although later sources (Graf 1997: 148-149) refer to buried defixiones in land, sea, river, water pipe, well or a tomb, regarding classical Athens Plato (Lg. 11.933b) offers some further information, when he refers to creatures of wax placed under the doors, the threshold, at crossroads and in tombs. The examples from graves are many, as well as from cult spaces, such as the sanctuaries of Demeter at Corinth, Knidos and Selinunte (Stroud 2013: 81-157).

By contrast, examples in residential areas are limited, and only three examples from Athens are known. The first two were found under the floors of houses in the Areus Pagus. The first is a lamp with inscribed names (Mastrocinque 2007: 88) and the second is a lead tablet in a cooking vase – *chytridion* (Jordan and Rotroff 1999). The third example comes from the 'industrial district' near the Athenian Agora, and this is a tablet, which was found under the floor of the room, attributed to a workshop of metal working or related to a blacksmith (Curbera and Jordan 1998). The second case, namely the lead tablet in the cooking vase, is examined by Jordan and Rotroff (1999: 148), who associate this finding with the ritual pyres. Ritual pyres are ceremonies that took place before the construction, renovation or reuse of a building from its owner, involving sacrifices, crushing vessels and probably libations. The presence in pyres of cooking vessels with chthonic symbolism, such as *chytridion* and *lopadion*, is associated with the vessels used by the Athenians during the second day of the feast of *Anthesteria* called *Chytroi*, where meals were prepared to honor the chthonic deity Hermes. The relationship of this custom with the chthonic deities also appears from the commission of this process in pits drilled into the soil. This custom has the character of *enagismos*, namely offers to the dead and the heroes (Eleftheratou 1996-1997). The ritual pyres as a means of communication with the chthonic gods and the dead seem to constitute a fertile ground for the exercise of magical practices. This custom is known on Salamis too (Chairetakis 2012). Even though the Salamis bowl was found in a refuse deposit rather than in a closed context, we can assume a similar position to those from Athens, namely in a small pit beneath the floor of a house. Anyway, there is a strong indication of a practice that was committed by a group or family against another, even though we do not know any members of these two groups-families or the reasons which forced the first to bind the second. The assumption that Phainippe on the Salamis bowl is the wife of Smikythion, of *IG* II^2 12849, is tempting, and in this respect, we could localize her home near Zougris' plot. The other names could probably belong to members of her family.

Although the Salamis bowl is an unusual object selected as a device for binding, it is irrefutable evidence that practices of binding were held in a domestic context on Salamis. The lack of more similar examples from other places of the ancient world may be accidental and coincidental, and we hope that this picture will change in the future. The practice of binding, however, as part of the household worship is an indisputable fact.

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My gratitude is to Dr. Iphigeneia Dekoulakou, Honorary Directress of Antiquities, for all her advice and encouragement over the last ten years, and to Panagiotis Dedevesis for the conservation of the bowl. The conservation of the pottery material from the Salamis excavations is funded by Psychas Foundation (Greece).

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Representations of masked figures: a comparative study and an interpretative approach to their cult-use and meaning

Maria G. Spathi

Introduction

The figurines discovered in Lechova, Corinthia, in the northeast Peloponnese offer the incentive for a more holistic approach towards figurines and representations of masked figures of humans and animals, in general. They are handmade, and they wear anthropomorphic or animal masks. This paper concisely presents the masked figures unearthed in cult sites across Greece dated predominantly to the Classical period and provides an interpretative approach to their use and meaning. The above figures and representations in iconography have hardly been researched, and for the first time an effort is being made to compare and interpret these representations in relation to their ritual context and to detect their role in cult ritual. In general, they may be associated with some kind of *dromena* (ritual performances), during which masks were used in initiation rites. Their distribution appears extensive, suggesting that they were of considerable importance in Greek religious practices.

The finds

The finds from Lechova and elsewhere

The figurines that prompted this study were found in a cave in Corinthia, located on a forested slope of Mt. Vesiza near modern Kryoneri. The cave was excavated periodically between 1995 and 2003 by the Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology. Even though the excavation produced large quantities of pottery and figurines, it was impossible to associate them with specific archaeological strata due to extensive clandestine excavations in previous years. The majority of the figurines from Lechova belong to common Corinthian types found en masse in Corinthia and beyond, e.g., in the Peloponnese, Attica and Boeotia.

The finds included hundreds of standing and seated female figurines, handmade, plank (board)-shaped and mould-made, carrying various dedications; protomes; a large number of circular dance groups; relief and cut-out plaques; figurines of youths and swaddled babies; and a variety of animals: horses, dogs, birds and rams (Kormazopoulou *et al.* 2006: 97-112 for brief report on the finds. Recently, Lolos 2011: 499-598). Also, from Lechova came large quantities of pottery: kylikes, small skyphoi, lekythoi, amphoras, kraters, oinochoai, kotylai, plates, lekanides, lamps and several miniature vases. Thanks to the graffiti surviving on six fragments, it was possible to identify the deities worshipped at the cave with the Nymphs (Lolos 2011: 599-600). The finds date from the 6th through the 4th century BC based on typology.[1]

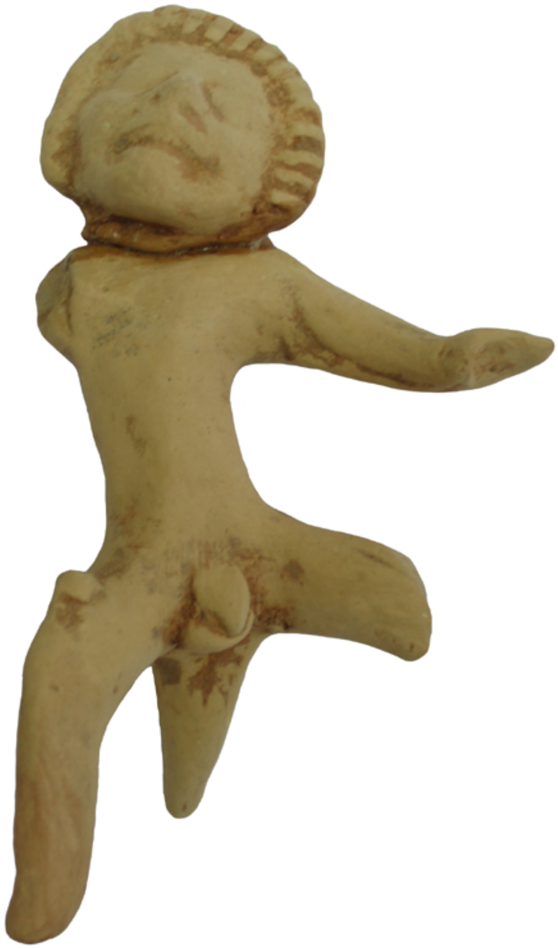

Figure 1: Masked male figurine, Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology (Inv. No. 3386 H. 9cm)

The figurines studied here date to the Classical period. The dating is largely based on typology since the stratigraphic evidence from the excavations is limited.

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[1] The terracotta figurines from the cave are being studied by I. Zigouri. I had the chance to see all the finds recovered by the Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology during the excavations in the cave while working for the Hellenic Ministry of Culture between 2001 and 2006.

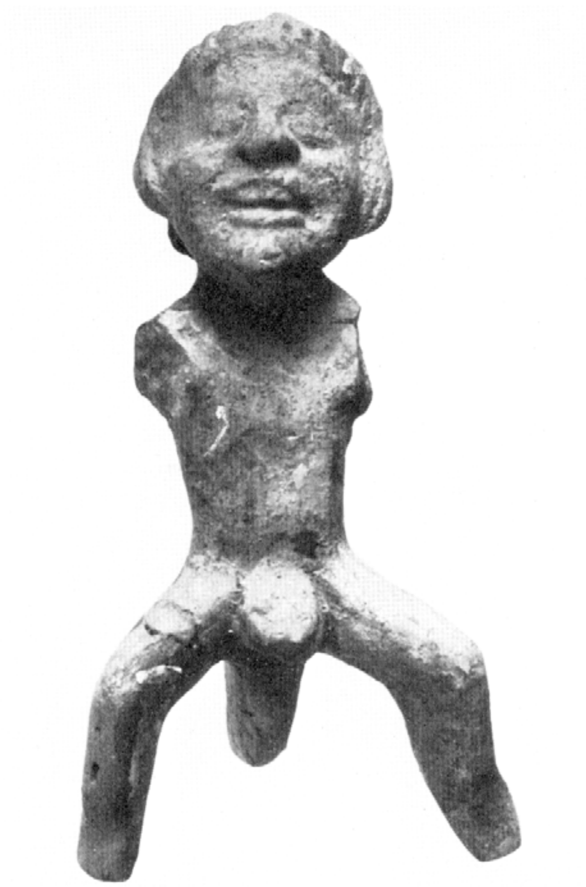

Figure 2: Masked male figure, from the Kabeirion of Thebes (H. 7.9cm; Schmaltz 1974: 144, no. 418, pl. 30). Courtesy of Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports /Archaeological Receipts Fund.

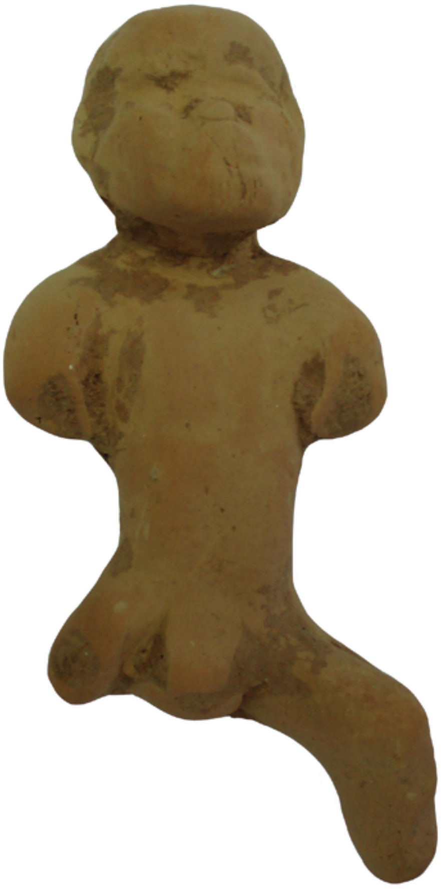

Figure 3: Male figurine with a mask with 'negroid' features, Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology (Inv. No. 2712, H. 8,3cm).

They belong to a group of figurines comprised largely of satyrs and apes (monkeys?) supported by a strut at the rear. They have handmade bodies and usually mould-made faces and originate mainly from the Argolid (e.g. Waldstein 1905, pl. XLIII female seated figures from the Argive Heraion with a support at the rear) and Corinthia (e.g. Stillwell 1952: 50, pl. 7; Higgins 1954: 253-255, pl. 133 cat. nos 932-934, 936-937, from Corinth).

When preserved, the body of most figurines is that of a naked male, while some examples appear to wear a knee-length, short chiton that covers all anatomic details. In general, the body is very basic without any details except for the male genitals. The head usually rests directly on the body without a neck (Figure 1), and its back is nearly flat and unworked. The position of the hands varies: they may be extended and hold round objects (krotala?) (Figure 7), and in one case an animal head (Figure 4). Most figurines appear to dance and wear human or Silenus masks, as well as animal masks (Figure 8). The masks with human features consist of typical, yet hyperbolic features representing rather enigmatic figures: intensive, bulging eyes, flat nose, half-opened mouth, full lips, high, prominent cheekbones and a protruding chin. The mask-traits are rarely indicative of gender, but through a comparison with finds with similar characteristics one can discern male and female examples along with examples that have animal heads portraying rams or monkeys. The human masks are mainly mould-made, while the animal heads are handmade. These figurines can be subdivided into the following categories:

Masked male figurines. The head features: incised, vertical lines of hair that frame the forehead; protruding ears; a handmade neck; a large and flat nose; full lips and a half-opened mouth with the teeth of the upper jaw visible. The forehead is low, the eyes large and bulging, the cheekbones robust and the chin protruding (Figures 1, 2). Eight examples of this type survive, of which five are heads, and one wears a head-cover that resembles a pilos.

Similar figurines carrying animals, such as a fox and a piglet, belong to private collections and reportedly originate from Aigina (Breitenstein 1941: 36, no. 319, no. 320), Athens and Boeotia (Winter 1903: 219, nos 5, 7 and 9, pl. 30, no. 418), and one more with a child on his shoulders from a grave in Argos (Papaspiridi-Karouzou 1933-1935: 16-53). Representations of worshippers as bearers of animals are a frequent motif in sanctuaries of Pan, but also in sanctuaries where initiation rites of youths take place. For example, the excavation of the sanctuary of Hermes and Aphrodite at Syme Viannou has yielded bronze plaques of animal bearers (Lembessi 1985: 121-136, 188-198; 1989, 61-62, for the motif of Criophoros). Other parallels come from the sanctuary of Pan on the slopes of Mount Lykaion (Hübinger 1992: 189-207), the sanctuary of Despoina in Lykosoura and the sanctuary in Berecla (Kourouniotis 1912: 160, figs 38-39).

Many parallels of this type, especially with regard to the face, are found on a figurine from a Classical grave from Sikyon (Kristalli-Votsi 1976: 65 pl. 58c), while a similar figurine was discovered at the Kabeirion in Thebes (Figure 2), along with several isolated heads with characteristic grotesque masks (Schmaltz 1974: 118, pl. 25, 144, no. 418, pl. 30). Schmaltz (1974: 114-126) identifies these figurines with caricatures of worshippers performing a masked ritual and Braun and Haevernick (1981: 25) suggest the possibility of ritual performances (*dromena*), possibly satyrspiele. The same themes are reflected in the iconography of skyphoi from the same sanctuary: representations of initiated worshippers (*mystes*) wearing pygmy-like (or negroid-like) masks (Braun and Haevernick 1981: 24-29; Daumas 1998: 24-36; 2003; Schachter 2003: 112-142). Lembessi (1992: 16) identifies them as comical figures lightening up the atmosphere after the rites, a theory that does not lessen the ceremonial character of these representations, since they reflect part of the mystery rites that took place in the sanctuary albeit in a comical way. Even the female figures are represented as men dressed in women's cloths, a feature not uncommon in initiation rites.[2] In sum, all the types discussed above may reflect ceremonies performed during initiation rites of youths.

Even though all these masked male figurines are relatively rare and handmade, it is noteworthy that they all look alike, an observation that leads us to believe that it was a type recognizable by the worshippers.

In the category of male masked figures also belong those with 'negroid' features. The body of these figurines is also handmade, the face and hair mould-made (Figure 3). Compared to the above group, the facial features are different and resemble those of a 'negro': full, intense lips, particularly wide nose, strong cheekbones, protruding lower jaw (prognathism), and short, wavy hair that covers the ears.[3] Four examples of this type were found: two heads, one figurine preserved to waist-height carrying an animal head with both hands (Figure 4), and a figurine that is almost intact. At least two more examples with similar traits come from Aigina and Boeotia: these two figurines hold in their left hand edible offerings for the deity (Kristalli-Votsi 1976: 65, pl. 58c).

With regard to the figurine from Lechova carrying an animal head, one may identify it as an animal mask about to be worn. Another figurine wearing a satyr mask while holding a mask of a young man in his hand originates reportedly from Athens (Hamdorf 1996: 153 no. 179), while similar examples occur on Cyprus (e.g. Karageorghis 1995: 55 fig. 29). At least one masked figurine among those discovered in the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Corinth has characteristics similar the examples discussed above (Merker 2000: 198-199, pl. 54, no H380). Lastly, a small mask from the Samian Heraion also bears 'negroid' features (Jarosch 1994: 92).

The group of figurines with 'negroid' features does not reflect Africans but rather highlights the particular traits of a mask, which must be hyperbolic and exaggerated. The exaggeration of the features suggests an intentional alteration for purposes of religious meaning. There is also another possibility, namely that these features are characteristics of worshippers with lower social status, e.g., workers, herdsmen etc., who were the main dedicators in suburban open-air sanctuaries and caves (Himmelman 1980: 55-63; Rumscheid 2006: 292-295, with bibliography mostly for the Hellenistic period). Representations of figures with 'negroid' (or pygmy-like) features are also found on the vases from the Kabeirion in Thebes mentioned above (Wolters and Bruns 1940: 81-128).

Masked females. Only four figurine heads with female masks are preserved (Figure 5). Their characteristics can be described as follows: wavy hair covering the back of the neck, full lips, round cheeks and slightly protruding chin. They appear to be laughing. They are robustly executed and recall figurines of old women mainly from Attica and Boeotia, dated in the 4th century BC (Pfisterer-Haas 1989; Spathi 2007: 112-114, for references). Figurines of old women are associated with Demeter and the festival of Thesmophoria, where ritual may have included mimetic actions by women (Stehle 2007: 170-172). There are examples of aged priestesses occupying prominent positions in rituals (Bremmer 1987: 191-216), even during religious festivals dominated by men, such as the ritual dramas in Eleusis (Clinton 1992: 84-90) or the performances during the Andanian Mysteries (Merker 2000: 340; Gawlinski 2010: 99). Masks of elderly women are also

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[2] For the dress in prenuptial initiation rites Serwint 1993: 403-422. For ritual nudity in initiation rites Bonfante 1989: 543-570.

[3] The type of the 'negro' in Greece starts in the 6th c. BC, probably in Rhodes and continues until Roman times. For representations of figures that are being interpreted as 'negroes' according to their facial features, see for example Blinkenberg 1931: 576-577, pl. 112, nos 2381, 2382, 2384; Hadzisteliou-Price 1969: 103; Raeck 1981: 164-213, with bibliography; Hausmann 1962, for representations from the Hellenistic period.

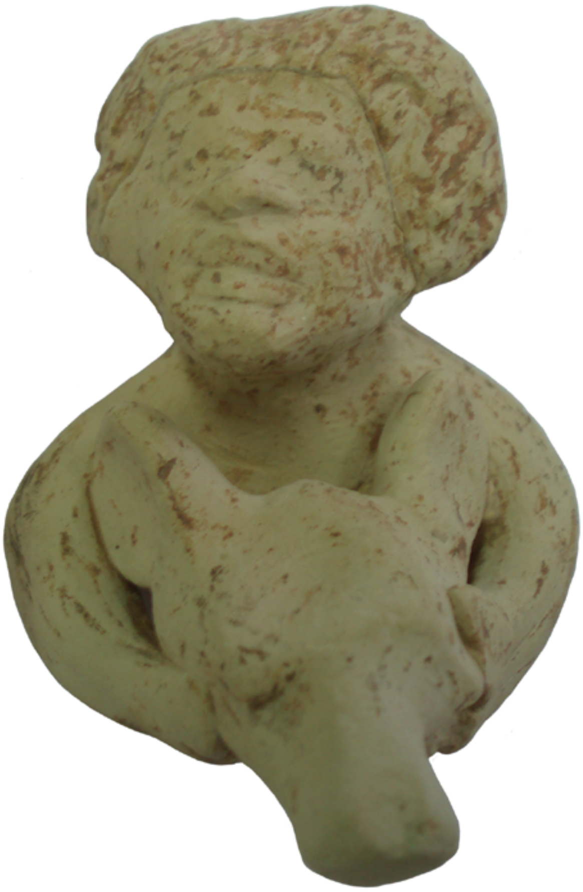

Figure 4: Male figurine with a mask with 'negroid' features carrying an animal head, Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology (Inv. No. 1111, H. 4.4cm).

found in the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Sparta and date to the 7th and 6th century BC. They are identified as 'graies' by some scholars based on the sources that mention Laconian dances performed by participants wearing ugly, grotesque masks of women (Bosanquet 1905-1906: 338-343; Dickins 1929: 164-167, 173; Kunze 1933: 1-14; Webster 1956: 130; David 1991; Vernant 1996: 226; Kressiser 2016: 541-542, 550-553. Contra: Carter 1987: 356).

Males with a Silenus mask. These figurines wear a mask of Silenus. Similar examples have been found in Corinth and Boeotia and are relatively common (For example, Breitenstein 1941: 36, no. 317, pl. 38, reportedly from Boeotia; Higgins 1954: pl. 133 no. 932-34 from Corinth; Hoffmann 1964: 67-71; Padgett 2003: 239 no. 54). The figures of Silenoi are represented in various types: with their hands extended on either side of the body (Figure 6), behind the head or clasped in front; the head is slightly tilted on one side, while at least one example carries a round object, evidently a musical instrument (*krotalon*) (Figure 7). They all seem to perform a kind of dance.

Figurines of Silenoi are commonly dedicated in sanctuaries and occur often in caves where the Nymphs and Pan are worshipped (Larson 2001: 230-256). The question that rises is whether these are depictions of mythical creatures or representations of disguised humans wearing a mask of Satyr or Pan (Nielsen 2002: 83; Frontisi Ducroux 2009: 284). The answer varies per

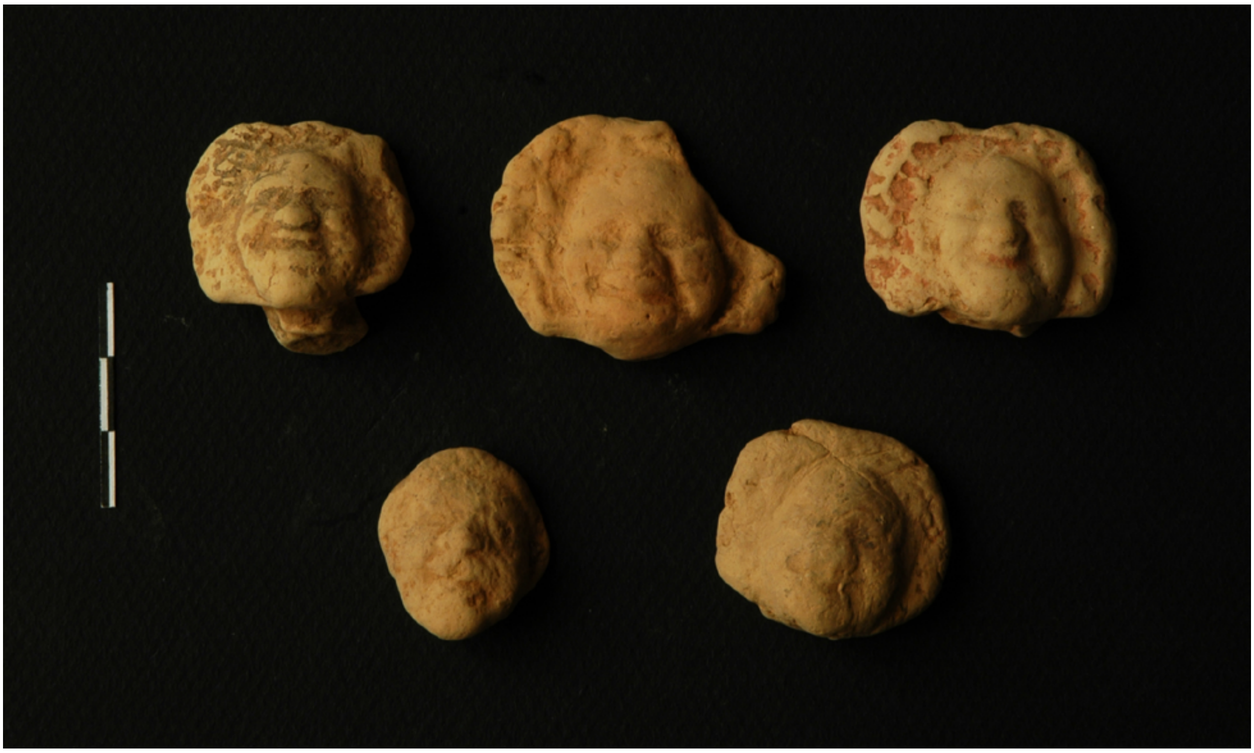

Figure 5: Heads of figurines with female masks, Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology (Inv. Nos 10144, 13190, 9072, 3919).

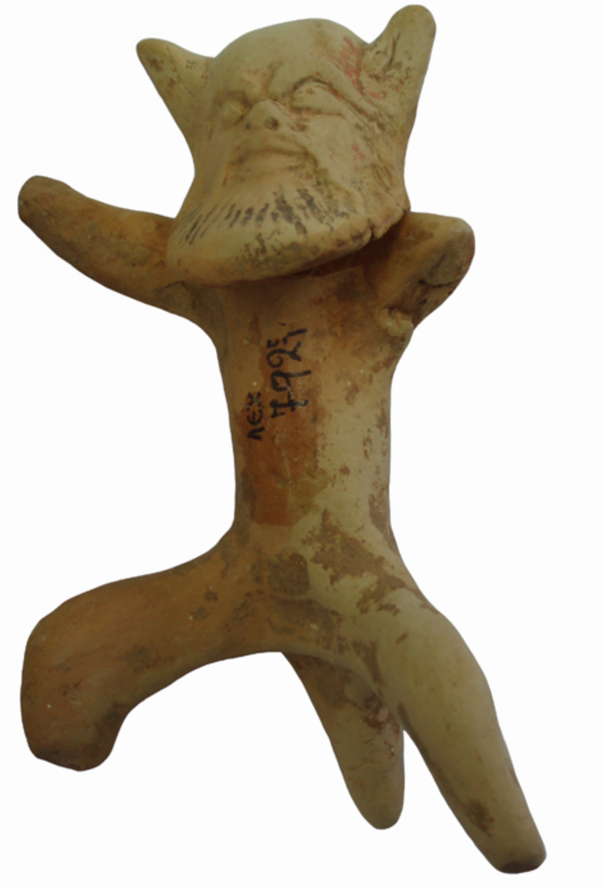

Figure 6: Figurine of a Silenus with hands extended on either side of the body, Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology (Inv. No. 7927, H. 9.1cm).

case, for example, it is interesting to note a figurine in Berlin that clearly represents a human figure wearing a mask of Pan while performing a dance or theatrical gestures (Knauß 2012: 325). There are also many representations of Silens on Attic vases of the 6th and 5th c. BC., which actually depict men dressed as Silens with masks and costumes. These scenes reflect ceremonies performed in ritual context (Hedreen 1992: 125-165, 169-170) or satyric drama (Brommer 1937; Hoffmann 1964; Heinemann 2016: 105-106, 227 with bibliography fn. 540 for the masks and costumes of the satyric drama).

Silenoi are not associated with fertility as much as with exaggerated sexuality and sexual desire, which, none the less, remains unfulfilled. This urge surpasses the limits of social norms and expected behaviour and, therefore, befits the performance of specific mystery rites that focused on the transition of one stage to the other through extremes. The Silenoi are directly related to Dionysos, who also may have been worshipped in the cave. The hybrid nature of Silenoi, human and bestial, allows them to balance between the world of men and animals. In general, Silenoi represent the world beyond the boundaries of social convention. Their ambiguity derives from their mixed nature, half human–half animal (Schauenburg 1973: 1-26; Napier 1986: 53-62; Hedreen 1992).

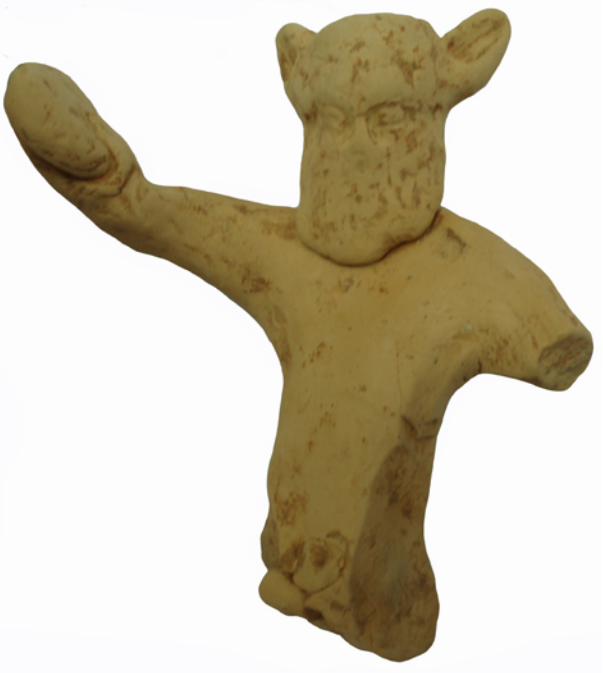

Figure 7: Figurine of a Silenus holding a krotalon (?), Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology (Inv. No. 1799, H. 8.5cm).

Humans with animal masks. The figurines of this category are entirely handmade. Three examples with a monkey head and one with a ram's head are preserved (Figure 8). Terracottas of monkeys have been found in sanctuaries (Langdon 1990: 407-424; Hoffmann 1964: 67-71), while figurines with an animal mask, and animal masks in general, occur more frequently compared to human masks as early as the prehistoric period: see for example the animal figurines from the cult complex at Mycenae, and the wall fresco of donkey-headed figures in procession (Gallou 2008: 98 with references for prehistoric examples).

To this day, the largest and best-known group of figurines with animal heads comes from the sanctuary of Despoina at Lykosoura (Kourouniotis 1912: 155-160; Stiglitz 1967: 36-38). The human figurines, about 140 examples, have heads portraying rams and bovines and date to the 2nd and 1st century BC (Figure 9). They are dressed in long mantles completely covering their bodies and hold the mantle's edge with the left hand while bringing the right to the chest. Some figurines preserve a *kanoun* on the head and are thus interpreted as masked worshippers participating in a procession of offerings (Voutiras 1999: 213-219; Jost 2003: 160-161; 2005: 98-100; 2007: 268 with references). In the same sanctuary, fragments of the drapery of Despoina's cult statue came to light, which was decorated with relief

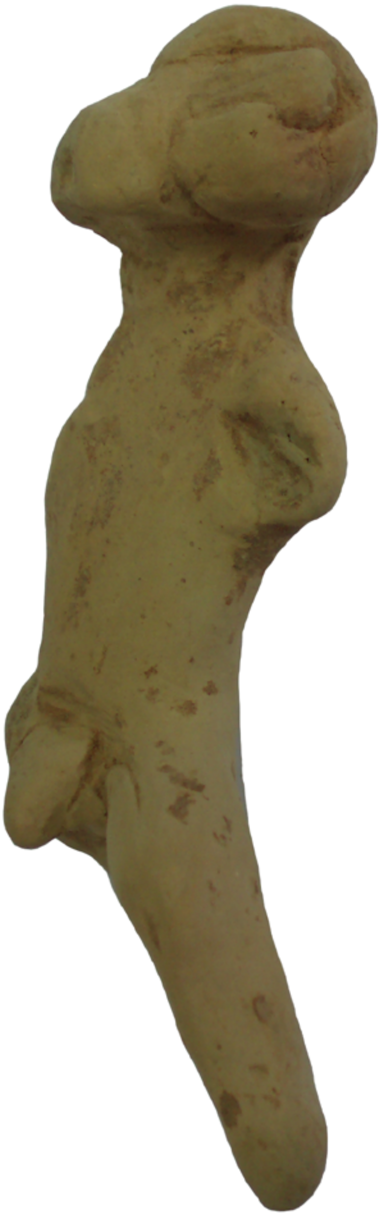

Figure 8: Figurine with an animal mask (ram), Ephorate of Palaioanthropology and Speleology (Inv. No. 1112, H. 8.5cm).

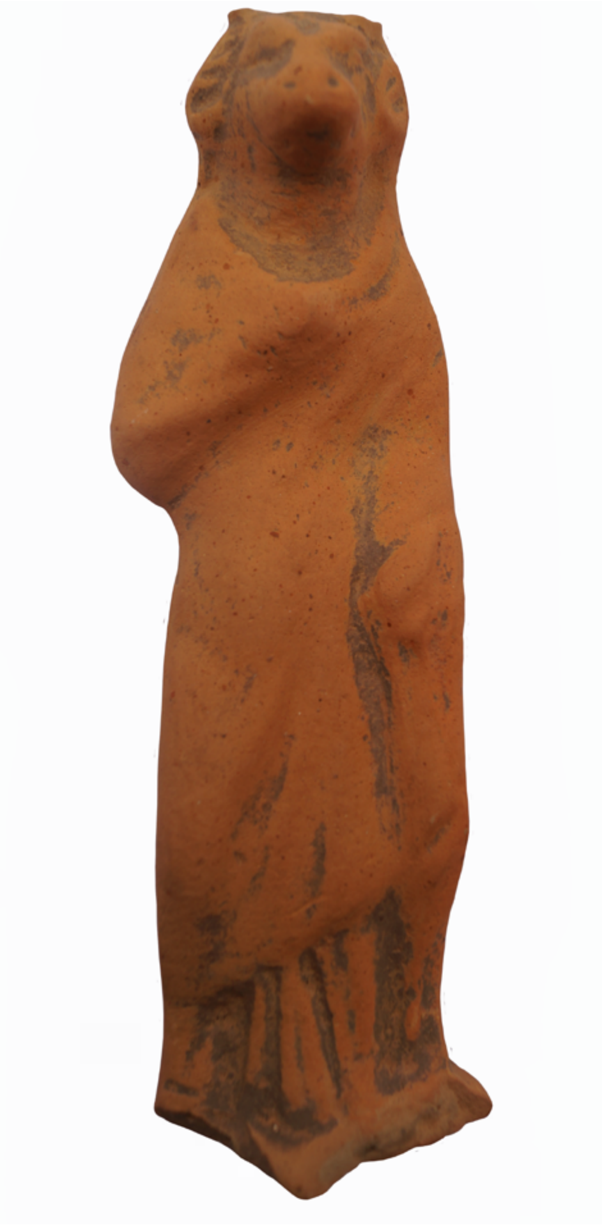

Figure 9: Criomorphic figurine from Lykosoura, Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia. Courtesy of Ephorate of Antiquities of Arcadia. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports / Archaeological Receipts Fund.

compositions (Figure 10): on the lowest frieze one discerns human figures with animal heads and limbs, including a donkey, a horse, a ram, and a fox, gesturing or dancing (Jost 2003: 59-60). Some figures even carry musical instruments. Aston (2011: 240-241, 299-301) interprets them as mythical creatures but most scholars identify the figurines and the relief figures on Despoina's drapery as masked worshippers taking part in cult rituals, including dance (Loukas and Loukas Durie 1988; Jost 2003). More specifically, Jost (2003: 157-164; 2007: 268-269) postulates some type of orgiastic dance associated with fertility rites.

To the above, one may add the handmade figurine from the sanctuary of Artemis and Pan at Lykochia in Megalopolis, Arcadia, housed today at the Museum of Tripolis (for the sanctuary see Steinhauer 1973: 179-180; 1975: 76-79; Baumer 2004: 122). The figurine is supported by a strut at the rear and wears an animal mask. Clearly discernible are the large animal ears, its snout, albeit chipped, and, at the back of the head, the edge of the mask which apparently covered the whole head. There is also the better-known bronze complex from Petrovouni in Arcadia, possibly of Geometric date, representing four ithyphallic figures with horse heads or masks, which are either standing across from each other or dancing. The sanctuary has been identified with that of Poseidon Hippios near Methydrio. There are various interpretations of the bronze complex (for references Voyatzis 1990: 45 pl. 65; Baumer 2004:

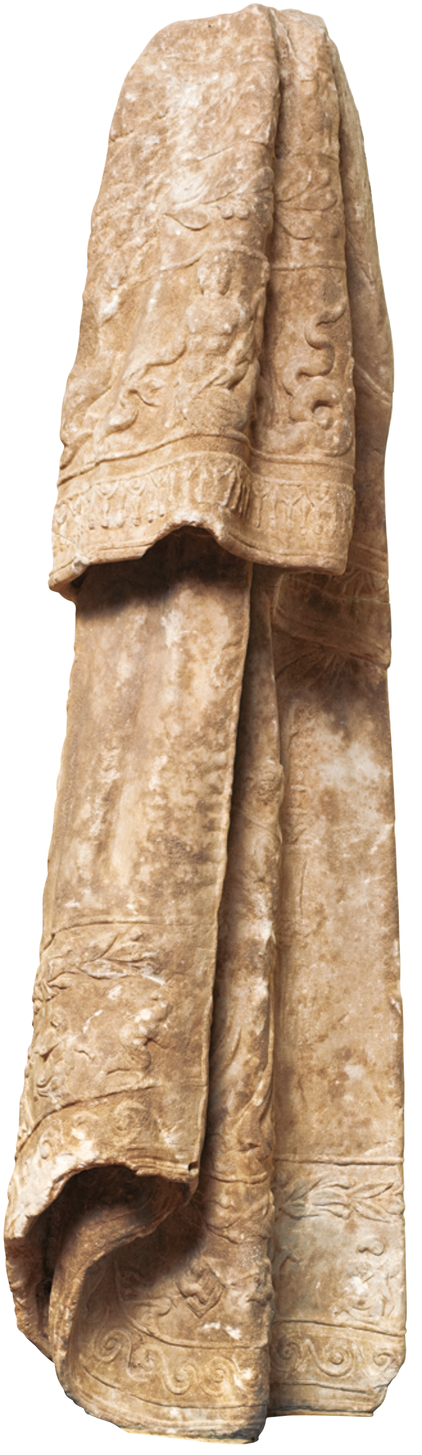

Figure 10: The veil from Lykosoura, Courtesy of the National Archaeological Museum, Athens. © Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Sports /Archaeological Receipts Fund.

125; Langdon 2008: 115-116) and the figures have been identified with early representations of Pan (Aston 2011: 115 fn. 114).

Kahil (1977: 86-98) associated fragments of Athenian vases with the *arkteia* in Brauron. A scene on a red-figure krateriskos shows a man and a woman, both wearing bear masks, as part of the *arkteia* ritual (Marinatos 2002; Scanlon 2002: 154, 171). This was apparently a ritual performed in the sanctuary, probably a mimetic representation of the aitiological myth of the cult (Dowden 1989: 25-41; Sourvinou-Inwood 1990: 9-13; Lonsdale 1993: 171-176; on the social function of the *arkteia*, see Cole 1984: 233-244; Perlman 1989: 111-130). Note that a human bronze figurine with a head of a bear was also found in the sanctuary of Alea in Tegea (Voyatzis 1990: 117-120 no. B3, pl. 58; Eichinger 2005: 67).

Animal dances in ritual and such choruses are mentioned in the literary sources (Lawler 1952: 317-324; 1964: 58-73. Nielsen 2002: 83). Representations of figures with animal masks and especially ape masks dancing to the aulos are also portrayed on vases, particularly on black-figure vases of the 6th century BC (Brijder 1988, 62-70; Greenlaw 2011: 71 fig. 98). On a skyphos from the Kabeirion a nude male in a bull`s mask, probably a mystes, is taking part in a kind of performance (dromena; Daumas 2003: 141). Similar finds come from Cyprus (Karageorghis 1994: 63-73; 2006: 160 fig. 154-156) and include figurines with human or animal masks found in sanctuaries and graves. The masks may be worn or held in one hand (Karageorghis 1993; 1995: 55-57; 1996, 15-16; Nys 1995: 19-31; Averett 2015: 3-45).

Isolated masks from cult-context

Although no similar finds were recovered from the cave, the figurine-types described above cannot be evaluated or interpreted without taking into consideration life-size masks and the literary sources referring to rituals with masks in sanctuaries. Five terracotta, life-size masks were unearthed in a deposit in Tiryns and date from the middle of the 8th until the middle of the 7th century BC (Jantzen 1975: 159-161, 203-204, for bibliography on the deposit Langdon 2007: 174 no. 7). They represent Gorgo (Jameson 1990: 214-222) rather than terrifying faces (Marinatos 2000: 60) and are among the earliest depictions of Medusa, with a half open, huge mouth with tusks, big ears and bulging eyes. Based on two Late Archaic inscriptions from the Perseus fountain near Mycenae, which declared that officials in Perseus' cult would act as judges on behalf of parents, Jameson (1990; also, Langdon 2008: 66-81) stresses the importance of these masks in initiation rites and ritual dances. During these ceremonies young boys were terrorized by and had to fight against figures wearing fearsome masks. A terracotta shield from the same deposit with the depiction of a Greek warrior fighting an Amazon on the outer surface and a centaur, probably Cheiron, on the inner face, reinforces the interpretation of maturation rites (Langdon 2007: 175-179).

This interpretation is strengthened by the discovery of clay masks at the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Sparta, dated only decades later, in the 7th and 6th century BC (Bosanquet 1905-1906; Dickins 1929; Falb

2009; Rosenberg 2015; Voegtle 2017, 12-16). Some of these masks are even life size, and Bosanquet (1905-1906: 331-43) and Dickins (1929: 163-186) interpret the wrinkled masks as faces of elderly ladies based on literary sources (Poll. 4.104) that describe Laconian dances in which the performers wore ugly, grotesque female masks. It is significant that among the finds from the sanctuary are included fragments of auloi and dedications of lead figures playing music, which together with the masks may be associated with festival competitions (Kennell 1995: 50-64, 70-97, 136-138). Carter (1987: 355-383; 1988: 89-98) recognizes the following types of masks: grotesque, wrinkled demons, heroes, Satyrs and Gorgons, and associates them with masks of fertility deities from the Middle East. At the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia young boys performed initiation rites probably wearing masks (Dawkins 1905-1906; Vernant and Naquet 1991: 47; Kennell 1995: 70-97; Froning 2002: 70-71; Karagiorga 1970: 124-132), although the masks from the sanctuary, due to their material, are rather votive.

Two more figurine fragments originate from the sanctuary of Artemis Mounichia in Piraeus, dated in the Late Archaic period (Palaiokrassa 1991: 109, pl. 14b, 21), while similar masks have been discovered in the Samian Heraion representing Silenus and grotesque or demonic figures (Buschor 1934: 53, no. 195, 201; Vierneisel 1961: 48-9, pl. 22, no. T1746; Jarosch 1994: 92. From the necropolis: Boehlau 1898: 157-158, pl. 13.1 and 6; Gercke 1969: 51-2; Sinn 1977: 43 no. 85). Another mask, described as a Gorgoneion, was found in the sanctuary of Athena at Gortys (Rizza and Scrinari 1968: 183, 272, pl. XXXII no. 215) and finally, a bronze votive Gorgoneion or terryfing mask (Marinatos 2000: 61) was found at the Kabeirion in Thebes (Langdon 2008: 110-111).

Several figures with animal or human masks, and isolated terracotta masks have been found on Cyprus and are evidence for masking rituals on the island. The masks were mainly discovered in Enkomi and Kourion and consisted of sanctuary dedications, dated from the Late Bronze Age through the Archaic period on Cyprus (Karageorghis 1993; 1995: 54-59; 1996: 15-16; Nys 1995: 19-31. For evidence for masking rituals in Late Bronze and Iron Age Cyprus see Averett 2015: 3-45).

Literary sources on the use of masks in cult rituals

In addition to the portable finds, the literary sources on the use of masks in cult rituals are of particular interest. In Pheneos, during a mystery ceremony in honour of Demeter Kidharia, the priest wore a mask in the form of the old goddess of Kidharia and shook the soil with rods (Paus. VIII, 15. 1-4). The purpose of this performance was to compel the underground demons to release the reproductive forces of the earth in order to secure a fruitful harvest (fertility ritual). During this ceremony a cult dance was performed by young girls, associated with initiation rites. However, at Pheneos, it is the priest that wears a mask, that of the deity herself, and not the worshippers (Jost 2003: 156-157), similar to the depiction on the krateriskos for Artemis Brauronia in Attika that has been mentioned above. It is not unusual that some important roles in ritual performances were played by priests (Nielsen 2002: 82).

Also, in the sanctuary of Artemis Korythalis in Sparta, the worshippers appear to have used wooden masks (Hesych. s. κυριττοί). Hesychios refers to βρυδάλιχα and βρυλλιχιστάς, i.e. Laconian dancers with masks, while Polybios (Pol 4. 104) apparently describes the same dances (Bosanquet 1905-1906: 338-343). Similarly, in literary sources we find descriptions of *dromena*/performances in which the participants covered their faces with gypsum or mud, creating a minimal mask, as in the case of Alpheionian Artemis (Paus. VI, 22. 8) or Proitides in Arcadia (Paus. VIII, 18. 7-8), associated with young girls' initiation rites. According to the myth, at the sanctuary of Alpheionian Artemis, the local river god attempted to rape Artemis, but she and the Nymphs accompanying her managed to escape by covering their faces with mud (Dowden 1989: 102-105). This is a typical case of a rite of passage for young girls.

Interpretative approaches to the use and meaning of figures with ritual masks

The number of figurines discovered in Lechova amounts to thousands; of them, the masked figurines form a small sample. Most figurines belong to types common in the Peloponnese, but the figurines in question are rather rare and appear to be connected with the nature of the cult in the cave. As we have seen above, figurines with masks and vases representing figures participating in cult dances have been found in sanctuaries of female deities, associated with initiation rites. For example, at the sanctuary of Despoina in Lykosoura most scholars recognize a mystery cult of fertility gods, even though the details of the cult are not fully understood. Indicatively, the figurines and the reliefs on Despoina's peplos have been interpreted as worshippers and priests (Loukas and Loukas Durie 1988; Jost 2003: 157-161), but Aston (2011: 240-241, 299-301) thinks that these figures may also represent mythical creatures. Initiation rites were part of the cult ritual, and masks were probably used in relation to these rituals.

Masks and representations of masked figures are related to the sanctuary of Artemis Brauronia (Kahil 1977: 86-98; Scanlon 2002: 154-171) and the corresponding one of Artemis Mounichia (Palaiokrassa 1991), where initiation rites of young girls are well attested through the arkteia. The transformation into bears reflects the performances (*dromena*) during which the participants re-enacted the foundation myth of the sanctuary and thus the core of the cult (Sourvinou-Inwood 1988: 9-67; Dowden 1989: 25-41; Lonsdale 1993: 171-176; Marinatos 2002: 29-42).

In the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia in Sparta, initiation rites of youths took place with masks also used a practice attested to in both the literary sources and the archaeological record, i.e. surviving masks. Artemis Orthia reigned over the initiation of youths through contests, for which sickles were used (Xen. *An.* 4. 8. 25). Around the altar, in the area of the later Roman theatre, trials were held, and competitions were watched by an audience (Bosanquet 1905-1906: 331-343; Dickins 1929: 163-186; Carter 1987: 355-383; 1988: 89-98; Kennel 1995: 133; Falb 2009). The masks from Tiryns are also associated with initiation rites and ritual dances, during which young boys were terrorized by and had to fight against figures wearing fearsome masks (Jantzen 1975: 203-204. Jameson 1990: 217; Langdon 2007: 174, no. 7; 2008: 67).

Isolated examples of masks were discovered at the Samian Heraion (Boehlau 1898: 157-158, pl. 13.1 and 6; Vierneisel 1961: 48-49, pl. 22 no. T1746; Jarosch 1994: 92), where the goddess worshipped was omnipotent and associated with fertility (Larson 2007: 33 with references). The masks may have been specifically connected with these rites (Jarosch 1994: 92). With the same type of worship were associated Artemis Korythalis in Sparta (Hesych. s. κυριττοί) and Artemis Alpheionis (Paus. VI, 22. 8), where according to the sources a typical case of rites of passages for girls took place (Nielsen 2002: 81).

In the sanctuary of Demeter and Kore in Corinth, rites of passage were celebrated for boys and girls of various ages. According to the excavators, these rites were not only associated with Demeter but also with Dionysos (Merker 2000: 327-341). The heroa/sanctuaries in honour of children/heroes, such as Opheltes in Nemea, where a figurine probably of the child Opheltes with a mask was found, also comprised ceremonies and initiation rites that marked the passage from childhood to adulthood (Pache 2004: 134 fig. 36). Similar rituals took place at the Kabeirion in Thebes, as we can deduce from the coroplastic offerings and the vase paintings depicting initiation rites of youths including masked figures, dedicated to Pais (Schmaltz 1974: 114-126; Braun and Haevernick 1981: 24-29; Daumas 1998, 24-36). In the sanctuary of Athena at Gortys the gorgon-like mask was found together with model shields and plaques depicting young heroes in combat, which may be interpreted as 'symbolic commemorations of accomplishments performed by young men' (Rizza and Scrinari 1968: 182 nos 210-212; Marinatos 2000: 60).

In addition, architectural constructions discovered in sanctuaries seem to have functioned as viewing points for worshippers, who could follow the mimetic rituals (ritual drama) performed by possibly masked participants (see discussion in Nielsen 2002: 16-17), e.g., the sanctuary of Despoina in Lykosoura, Demeter in Corinth, Pergamon and Syracuse, the Cabeirion on Samothrace and of Artemis in Brauron (Becker 2003: 233-259; Mylonopoulos 2006: 92-103 with bibliography; Melfi 2010 for performative rituals in the Asklepieia of Roman Greece). In the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia at Sparta there was an area around the front of the temple that was used for performances from the beginning of the cult (Nielsen 2002: 89-93).

Conclusions

Representations of figures with animal masks reflect initiation rites during which the youths renounced their human nature for a certain period of time and lived on the periphery of society, surviving on animal instincts. Symbolic creatures of this double nature are the Centaurs, Amazons, Silenoi, Gorgo-Medusa, i.e., hybrid beings, half-animal/half-human (of ambiguous nature, 'Mischwesen'). This explains why occasionally there is intentional ambiguity in some representations, making it unclear if it is an ape (or monkey) or a human depicted (Langdon 1990).

The use of a mask and the disguise in general, may be characteristics of a specific part of initiation rites, the so-called marginal or liminal phase, i.e., the transition from one phase to another (e.g., Pettersson 1992: 73-75). This stage signals the passing from one state to another and is characterized by ambiguity, exaggeration in the sense of liminal, beyond the boundaries of the socially accepted. This exclusion from the social network is marked among others, by the use of masks in the cult ritual (ceremony of ritual exclusion). The use of masks and nakedness symbolize expulsion from organized society, isolation and a change of state. The youths under initiation were transformed wearing masks of the opposite sex, of animals, silenoi, and monsters (?), they underwent trials and competitions, danced, and in the end, they were reunited with the community.

The use of masks is a common element in ceremonies and rites of passage in many cultures, both as a means to express the change and transformation from one state to another when worn by the initiate (myste/youth), and as an object of fear when worn by others in order to intimidate the myste/youth, a consistent aspect of the rite of passage (for the masks: Croon 1955: 13-16; Nilsson 1967: 157-163; Napier 1986; Seiterle 1988: 3-14; Frontisi Ducroux 2009; Burkert 2011: 163-166. For masked rituals: Langdon 2007: 173-191; 2008: 114-117).

Lastly, dance and music played an important role in the initiation rites of both men and women, as attested by representations on vases and figurines of dancers, usually found in caves (Lawler 1964: 58-73; Lonsdale 1993: 137-205). Dancing appears to be an activity that affects the forces of nature. The power of Pan when he plays the syrinx and dances is similar to that of Apollo when he strikes his lyre. Pan is mentioned in the sources as χοροποιός (Soph. *Aj*. 698). It is noteworthy that from the Lechova cave also come fragments of female circular dance groups, a common find in caves where Pan and the Nymphs are worshipped. Related examples come from sites at Leukas (Kalligas 1968: 321 pl. 259b; Zachos 2003: 278 no 148) and Corfu (Spetsieri-Choremi 1991: fig. 10-13) and from Corykeion Andron in Phokis (Partida 2003: 211 no 96).

It seems possible that at the Lechova cave some kind of *dromena* (ritual performance-drama, ritual mimetic actions) took place 'a dramatic performance with a plot taken from the myth of the god in whose honour it was enacted as a ritual during the festive liturgy, often with the active participation of the worshippers' (Nielsen 2002: 12) and that the figurines reflect them, being a commemoration of them, just as the masks functioned in the sanctuary of Artemis Orthia. One should keep in mind that similar masks were probably standard types, easily recognizable by worshippers and participants to the rites, just as the theatre masks were.

Despite the fact that from the Lechova cave we have only traces of possible ceremonies and initiation rites, only partially reflecting the cult activities in the cave, one could still make the assumption of the performance of rites of passage, both in connection to the cult of the Nymphs in caves and in relation to the rest of the finds from the site. But until the rest of the material from the cave is published, the above remains a hypothesis and at the same time an incentive for the study of similar finds in ritual context. Caves are usually located in distant areas and are thus appropriate for such rites. Away from inhabited zones and occasionally at hard-to-reach destinations, caves were a refuge for men and animals. They also symbolized the pre-cultural nature of man, its refuge before the formation of communities, and thus a primitive environment. In sum, I conclude that *dromena*/rituals with masks were an important channel of communication in Greek religion, as they allowed many, if not all, worshippers the chance to actively participate in cult. This is even more reason to study them.

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Detecting the cult of a border sanctuary on the Messenian slopes of Mount Taygetos

Socrates Koursoumis

The inventories of the Benakeion Museum of Kalamata (modern Archaeological Museum of Messenia), record the delivery of a small group of ancient terracottas by a shepherd, Antonios Bounas, in 1965 (Themelis 1965: 207, pl. 217b-c). According to the catalogue entries, the terracottas were found in a cave at the area of Timiova or Demiova, in the vicinity of the homonymous monastery, near the village of Gianitsa (modern Elaiochorion), on the Messenian slopes of Mount Taygetos, a few kilometres to the southwest of Kalamata. As the modern settlement of Elaiochorion is identified with the ancient *kome* of Kalamai (Figure 1), the study and the identification of the terracotta group may offer new perspectives to the understanding of the history and archaeology of the area.

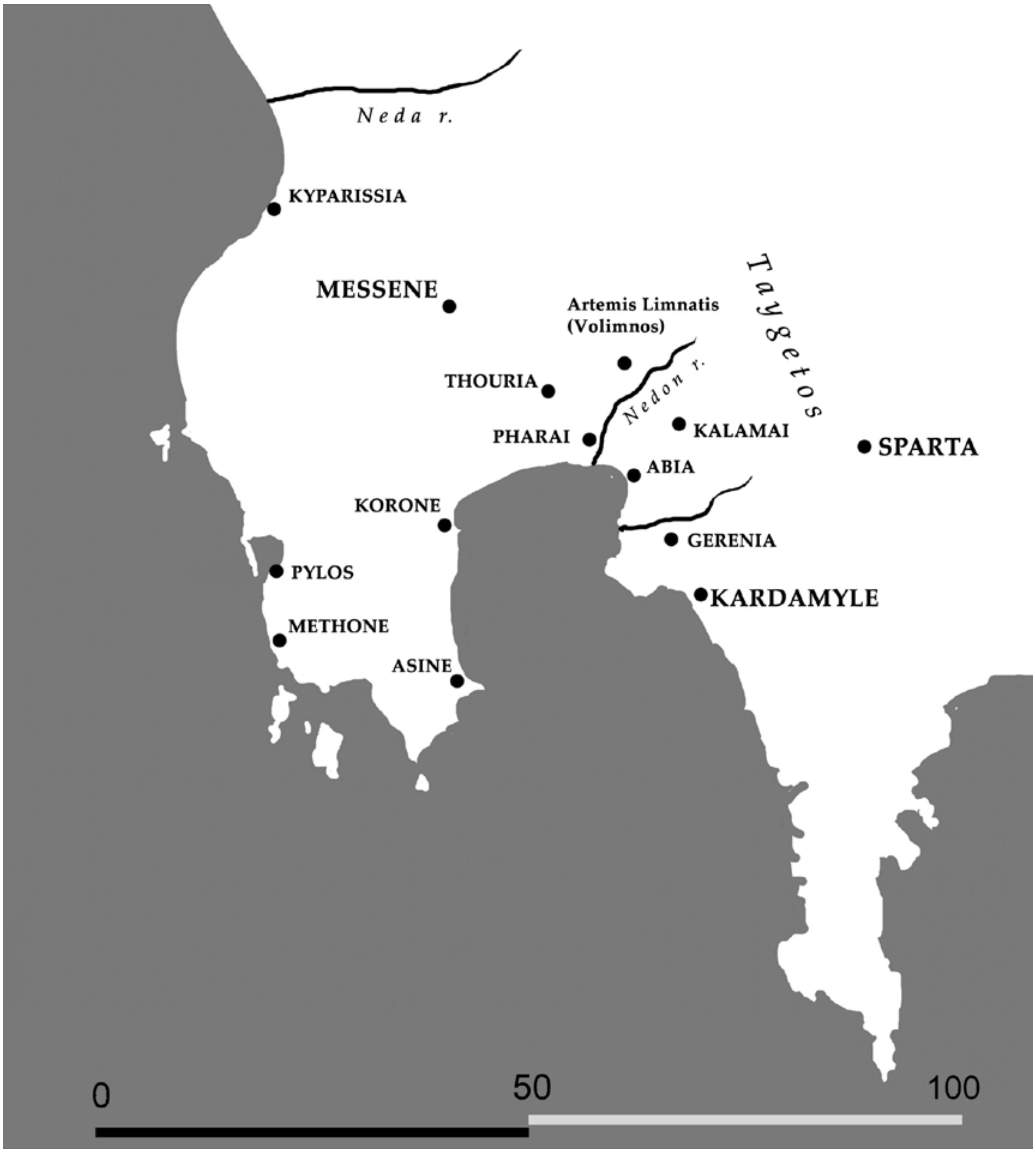
Neda r.
KYPARISSIA
MESSENE
Artemis Limnatis
(Volimnos)
Taygetos
THOURIA
Nedon r.
PHARAI
KALAMAI
SPARTA
ABIA
KORONE
GERENIA
PYLOS
KARDAMYLE
METHONE
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Figure 1. Map of ancient Messenia and Laconia.

The group consists of seventeen terracottas, i.e. fifteen mould-made figurines and two miniature vessels, a miniature kylix and a fragmented strainer, which was unfortunately not found in the storerooms of the Archaeological Museum of Kalamata (Figures 2, 3). All figurines are made of the same hard-fired reddish fabric, containing few inclusions. They all have a main frontal side, while their back is usually finished with a plain, flattened piece of clay. Based on technical similarities, they should all be ascribed to a local workshop that had limited knowledge of clay preparation, moulding and firing.

Since there is apparently no secure evidence regarding their find context or use, the study of the Demiova figurines shall be based exclusively on their typology. They are categorized into four groups:

Type I: Standing women wearing the peplos

Type Ia: Standing woman with arms at her sides.

AMM 216 (H. 21.4cm): Figurine of a woman wearing the Doric peplos and a polos on her head. The figurine stands on a high base (5.5 x 4.2 x 3.3cm). This hollow figurine has an open back and is unslipped. The type is quite common (Bonias 1998: 201 no. 489) pl. 56; also see: Winter 1903: III.i, 64, no. 6. Higgins 1954: 180 n. 674, pl. 88), probably related stylistically to monumental stone sculpture. Comparanda from Halai (Goldman and Jones 1942, 395, pl. XI, II-c-4) suggest a date in the early 5th century BC for the Demiova figurine.

Type Ib: Standing woman with right hand placed on her breast.

AMM 217 (P.H. 15.3cm) is a partially preserved hollow figurine, with its lower part missing. The figurine has a rectangular vent on its mould-made, rounded back. It portrays a female figure wearing the Doric peplos with a long, arched overfold with kolpos. A himation is wrapped around her waist. Her right arm is leaning towards her breast, holding an attribute, most likely a flower. This is well known figurine type, beginning in the Archaic period, yet a variation of it, with a himation instead of a peplos, was very popular by the mid-5th century (Higgins 1954: 83-84 n. 210-213, pl. 37; Bonias 1998: 181 n. 360, pl. 46). Comparanda from Boeotia and Lokris suggest a date for the Demiova figurine in the early 5th century (Winter 1903: 59 no. 6), as does the rectangular vent on its back (Higgins 1986: 102, fig. 117 right; Merker 2000: 18).

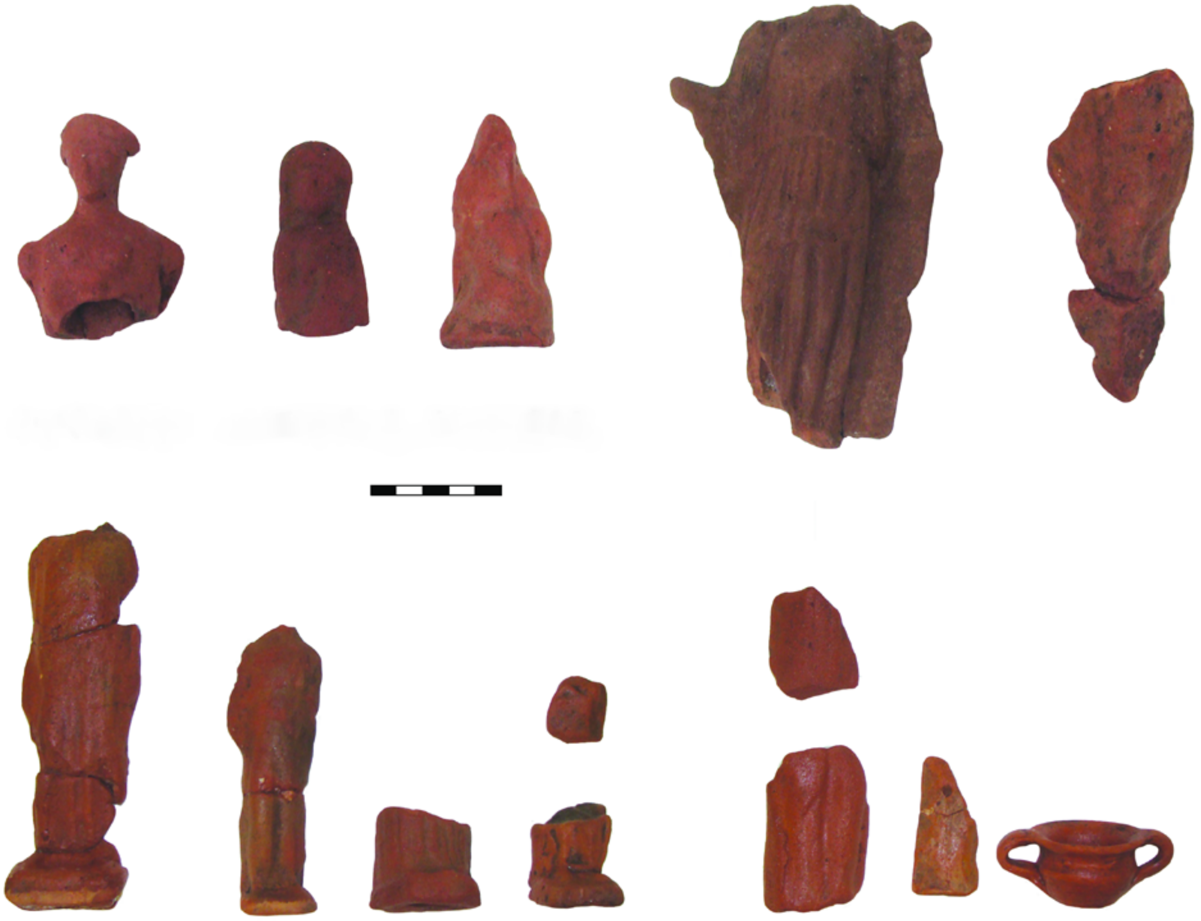

Figure 2. Terracotta figurines from the cave of Demiova. Top left: AMM 229, AMM 227, AMM 226. Top right: AMM 225, Π 7444. Bottom left: AMM 230, AMM 228, Π 7441, Π 7442. Bottom right: Π 7443, Π 7445, AMM 231 (Photographs by S. Koursoumis).

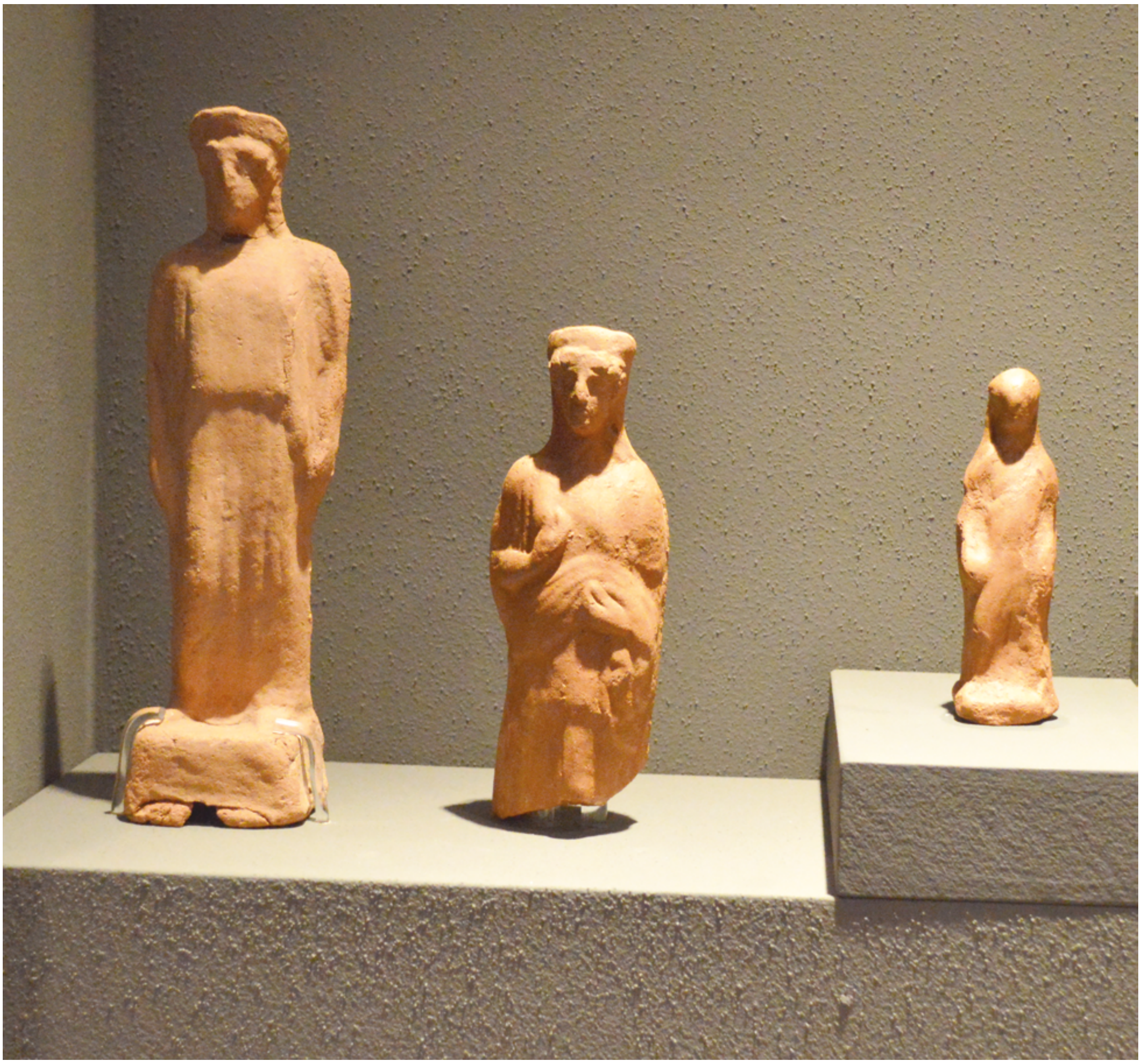

Figure 3. Terracotta figurines from the cave of Demiova: AMM 216, AMM 217, AMM 218 (Photographs by D. Kosmopoulos).

Type Ic: Standing woman raising her right arm

AMM 225 (P.H. 16.3cm) is a standing female figurine wearing an Attic peplos (Peplos of Athena), with an overfold belted at her waist, pinned with disk brooches on its shoulders. The head is missing. The front and back sides of the body were moulded in two different moulds, awkwardly joined together. Based on an Archaic archetype of the Early Classical 'Severe Style' (Poulsen 1937: 26, Abb. 19), of which the earliest terracotta examples are dated to the Late Classical period, this Demiova figurine is likely to be dated to the 4th century BC (Winter 1903: 77 no. 6; Higgins 1967: 59-60, pl. 23C).

Type II: Standing woman wearing chiton

AMM 218 (H. 10.7cm) is a hollow figurine, with a narrow vent underneath. It portrays a standing figure, perhaps a votary, holding an attribute with her left hand, probably a phiale. Her right leg slightly projects, covered by the drapery. The handmade back is finished with a piece of clay. Covered with a lustrous self-slip, its facial features and drapery are blurred. This type is well known from Crete; its earliest examples are dated to the second half of the 4th century BC (Higgins 1967: 60 pl. 23A), suggesting that the Demiova figurine is likely to be Early Hellenistic.

AMM 227 (P.H. 7.7cm) preserves the upper part of the body of a female figure with a handmade and flat back. A thin quite lustrous self-slip covers this solid figurine. As the details lack clarity due to multiple use of the mould, it is not clear whether one or both hands are placed on the breast holding an attribute. The head is covered with a mantle. The careless manufacture and the narrow shoulders of this slender figure suggest a date in the 3rd century BC (Merker 2000: 129-30, pl. 27, H 52).

AMM 228 (P.H. 11cm) is a slender figure with narrow, slopping shoulders, missing its head. The right arm is clearly placed on the right flank, whereas the left hand probably rests on her abdomen. There are no traces of a mantle. It probably portrays a votary and is dated to the 3rd century BC (Merker 2000: 207, pl. 27, H 45).

AMM 230 (P.H. 15cm) is another solid female figurine of a votary placed on a low base (3.8 x 3.2 x 2.3cm). It is self-slipped and polished and has a flat back. The break on its left flank is probably due to a missing left hand placed there with arm bent. The drapery is blurred, yet comparanda suggest that a mantle is draped around her torso (Merker 2000: 206, pl. 26, H36), thus dating the Demiova figurine to the Early Hellenistic times.

Although poorly preserved, four fragmentary terracotta figurines (Π 7441, Π 7442, Π 7443, Π 7445), seem to bear a strong resemblance to AMM 228 and AMM 230, in terms of both moulding and typology. They also portray votaries and are dated to the Early Hellenistic period.

Type III: Seated figurines

AMM 229 (P.H. 8.8cm) is a partially preserved figurine, covered with lustrous self-slip. Its handmade back is flat. It portrays a seated female figure, crowned with a handmade stephane. Both facial features and drapery are blurred due to the multiple use of the mould. Because of the unclear mould impression, arms that may have been attached to the body are no longer visible. Part of the back of the seat (throne?) is visible at the height of shoulders. It is dated to the middle of the 5th century BC (Also see Merker 2000: 104, pl. 17 C190; 60-61, 125, 188).

Π 7444 (P.H. 12.6cm) is a partly preserved figurine, made in a very worn mould. It is covered with a lustrous self-slip and has an open back. It portrays a seated female figure, wearing a long dress, probably a chiton, with sleeves. The left arm is not visible and was probably attached to the torso, while its right arm projects, probably holding an attribute (phiale?) (Winter 1903: 89 no. 7). The throne is placed on a high, rectangular pedestal, moulded separately. Moulding and technical features of the figurine resemble other Hellenistic figurines of the Demiova group.

Type IV: Crouching figure

In terms of typology, AMM 226 is a rather 'anomalous' piece in comparison to the other types of the Demiova group. This hollow figurine (H. 9.5cm), covered with a self-slip, has an open back. Its details lack clarity, as facial features and drapery are totally blurred. The outline of the head is conical, indicating the presence of a pilos or a cloak. The face is elongated, rendered as a narrow, flat surface covering the upper part of the chest of the figure. The outline of its arms is also blurred, whereas a swollen abdomen clearly projects. The figure stands on a rounded high part on top of a rounded base, made in the same mould. Despite the unclear mould impression, we can distinguish a figure crouching on a rock, which may be identified either as a satyr playing the double flute, (Winter 1903: III.i, 216 n. 5), or a boy (Bonias 1998: 200 no. 485, pl. 55), wearing a pilos. Like the other figurines in the group, this is very likely dated to the 3rd century BC.

Type V: Tripartite figurine

AMM 224 an intact terracotta figurine, is probably the most interesting and stimulating object of the Demiova group (Figure 4; H. 12.1 cm. W. (top). 3.6cm. W (base) 6.1cm. D. 4cm). Like the rest of the Demiova figurines it has an unclear mould impression, probably due to the multiple reuse of the mould. Though three-dimensional, the figurine has one main, frontal, fully

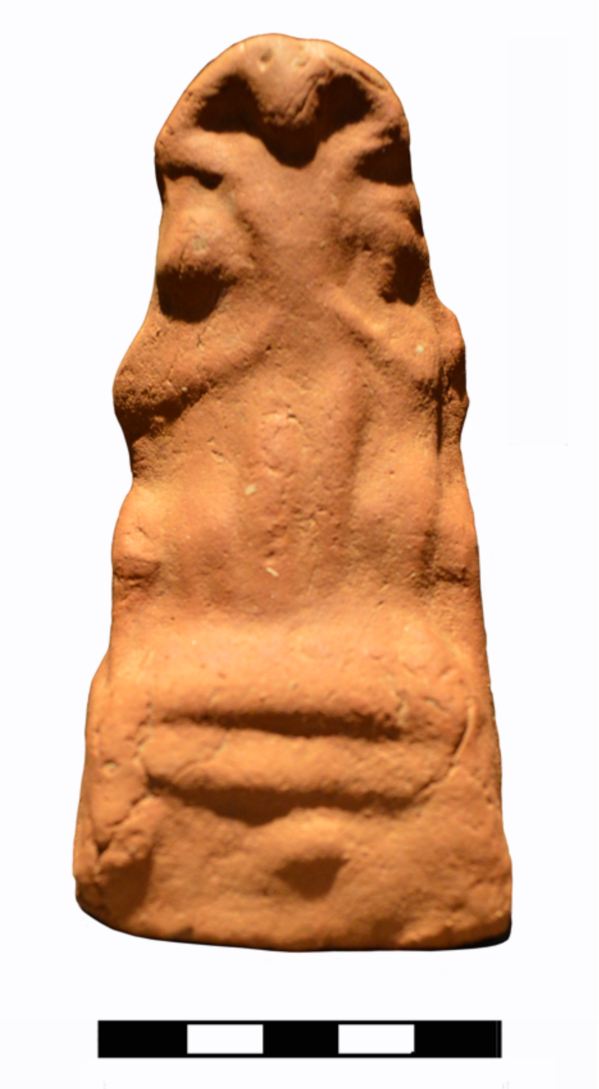

Figure 4. AMM 224: The tripartite terracotta figurine of Demiova (Photograph by D. Kosmopoulos).

rendered side, resembling a plaque. The upper part of its back is covered with a plain piece of clay, while a huge rectangular vent has been opened in its lower part. Three figures are depicted on the front. A naked woman stands in the centre, with slightly bent knees and hands placed upon her head. She is flanked by two shorter figures, with slightly bent knees. The head of the right figure, awkwardly elongated and rather grotesque, turns slightly to the centre of the scene, while its left hand is placed on the right flank of the woman. By contrast, the left figure carefully places its left hand on her belly and rests its head on the left flank of the woman. All three figures stand on top of a triple pedestal. Two rounded parts projecting on the sides of the tripartite figurine may be identified as the arm rests of a seat, probably a throne; two small parts of its back are visible on top of the heads of the two attendants.

The figurine is ascribed to an iconographical type quite popular in the southern Peloponnese. Figurines or plaques depicting this unusual scene, have been found at the rural sanctuary of Artemis and Timagenes in the Laconian Aigiai (Bonias 1998: 199-200 nos 482, 483, 484), pl. 54) in a deposit at Amyklai (Stibbe 1996: 247-250, Abb. 131-132) as well as in the excavation of the Ω-Ω Building in the centre of Messene (Themelis 1998: 175 fig. 41; Papaefthimiou 2002: 137-138, pls 4-7). Despite the lack of conclusive, contextual evidence, comparanda from Messenia and Laconia, as well the rectangular vent on its back, suggest a date in the first half of the 5th century BC.

This iconographical type has been associated with the so called 'Magoula group', a marble statuary found in the 19th century at the site of Magoula, in the area of Sparta, and exhibited today in the Archaeological Museum of Sparta (inv. no. 364) (Dressel and Milchhoefer 1877: 297-298). The group consists of a central nude female figure, whose head, arms and calves are now missing (P.H. 48cm), flanked by two shorter figures. The left one is almost totally missing, apart from his left arm which is placed on the woman's belly (P.H. 22cm). To the right, a shorter figure, with his calves missing, probably a boy or a young man plays the double-flute (P.H. 28cm). The Magoula group has been thoroughly studied and dated variously from the late 7thcentury down to the late 6th century BC, yet a date around 600 BC seems more plausible (Marx 1885: 182-183; Tod and Wace 1906: 172; Delivorias 1969: 131, pl. 120a; Palma 1974: 301-307; Pipili 1987: 58-60; Dörig 1993: 146-147; Stibbe 1996: 247-253).

Reconstructed in a kneeling pose with upraised arms, the statue has been related to a limestone relief from Boğazköy and was eventually identified as the depiction of the Greek goddess Eileithyia, kneeling at the time of labour, flanked by her attendants (Daktyloi or Dioskouroi; Dörig 1993: 145-151, Abb. 6-8; see also Marx 1885: 185-198; von Prott 1904: 18-20; Delivorias 1969: 131; Pipili 1987: 58-60; Pingiatoglou 1981: 135; Stibbe 1996: 247-253, Abb. 135-137; Bonias 1998: 84-85; Lembessi 2002b: 47-48 n. 62). The argument was mainly based on Pausanias' (8.48.7) reference to the kneeling statue of Auge, a goddess associated with the birth of Telephos, located in the temple of Eileithyia at Tegea. However, there are no indications for a kneeling pose of the central figure of the Magoula group, nor a swollen abdomen (Marx 1885: 188), and a kneeling iconographical type is anomalous in comparison to types of the goddess of childbirth (Olmos 1986: 695 n. 103, 699).

On the other hand, the Magoula statuary group is obviously associated with the iconographical type of the tripartite terracottas from Laconia and Messenia and should be considered an archetype for their modelling. Therefore, the fragmentary, nude figure of the Magoula group may be reconstructed as a standing figure with her hands placed on her head (Bonias 1998: 84-85) and her knees slightly bent, in front of seat, e.g. a footstool or a throne (Figure 5). The diagonal break of her thighs indicates that the missing calves were attached to the seat. The projection of her buttocks should be interpreted not as a result of a kneeling but rather of a standing pose, probably related to the seat behind her, i.e. as an attempt to rise or sit. This argument is further supported by the resemblance of a similar pose of an Archaic figurine (Lembessi 2002a: 98-99, fig. 40, 68, pl. 21), as well as a partially preserved statue of a naked woman from Rethymnon, slightly bending forward and identified as standing by Lembessi (2002b: 39-40).

The moment portrayed is apparently joyful, as by the time she tries to rise or sit one of her two attendants is playing the double-flute, while the other embraces her. It is very likely that both her attendants stepped on the furniture while clinging to the goddess's body. Due to the upraised arms and the obvious nudity of the female figure, the scene has been interpreted as an epiphany (von Prott 1904: 18-20; Papaefthimiou 2002: 138), yet it may also be seen as a depiction of a ritual enthronement (*thronosis/thronismos)* of a goddess (Sakellarakis 2006: 152-159).

Further evidence for a more precise interpretation of the Magoula group is provided by information related to its find spot. According to Eleni Kourinou's (2000: 187-192) study on the ancient topography of Sparta in relation to the modern topography, the area of the acropolis at Sparta was called 'Magoula' by the 19th century. In this area, a substantial number of Spartan sanctuaries were established, thoroughly recorded by Pausanias (3.17). Among them, the sanctuaries of two of the most prominent deities of Sparta, Orthia and Eileithyia, were located next to each other on the southwestern foothills of the acropolis, at a site called 'Limnaion' (the Marshes; Paus. 3.17.1). According to

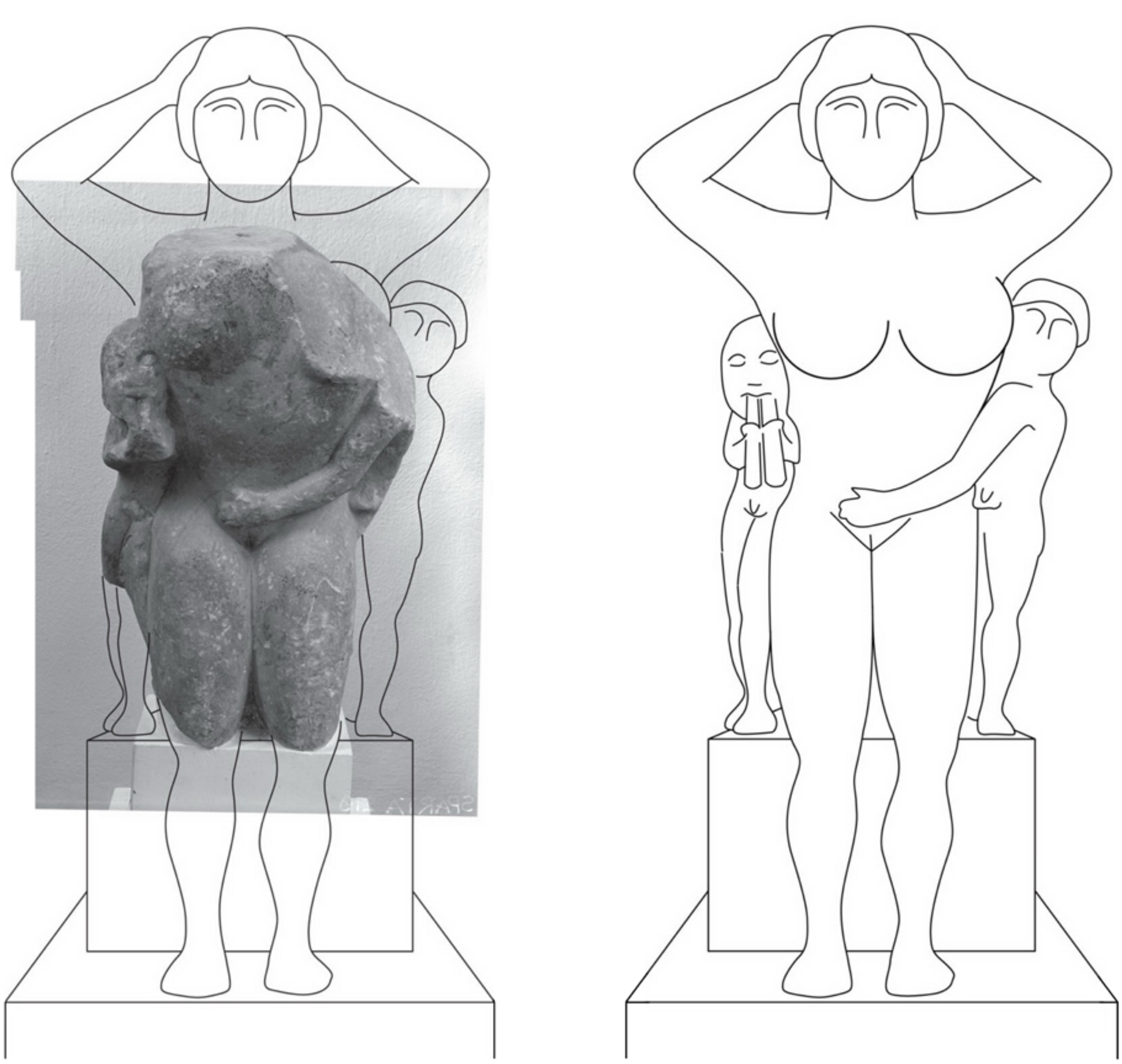

Figure 5. A suggestion for the restoration of the Magoula group (Sparta Archaeological Museum, inv. no 364), based on terracotta comparanda (Drawing by G. Nakas).

a narrative attested by Pausanias, in the marshes of Limnaion, two Spartan youths, Astrabakos and Alopekos, sons of Irbos, discovered the xoanon of Orthia and straightaway became insane; the xoanon was found in a thicket of willows, and the encircling willow made the image stand upright. Later, all male youths of Sparta were engaged in her cult (Paus. 3.16.9-11). One of the epithets Orthia bore was 'ἐπιφανεστάτη' (*epiphanestatē*), while she is referred to as being worshipped together with her 'συγκαθιδρυμένους θεοὺς' (*synkathidrymenous theous*) (*CIG* 1444. Wide 1893: 100; also see Strabo 9.2.29; *IG* V 1, 497.17). It is worth noting that Astrabakos was venerated as a local hero in his own sanctuary on the Spartan acropolis, next to the sanctuary of Lycurgus (Paus. 3.16.6; Papachatzis 1979: 368 n. 1). Eventually, the identification of the scene of the Magoula group as an epiphany of the Spartan goddess Orthia and her attendants, initially suggested by Beatrice Palma (1974: 301-307), becomes more plausible.

Detecting a cult at Kalamai

The identification of the cult in the Demiova cave remains problematic. Although lost today, the cave should be located in the vicinity of the Demiova monastery, near Elaiochorion / Gianitsa. The modern settlement is identified with the ancient *kome* of Kalamai (Roebuck 1941: 122-123; Hope Simpson 1966: 119 and n. 27; Meyer 1978: 180-181; Shipley 2004: 554, 556). Polybius (5.92.4) attests that the *chorion* Kalamai was captured by the Spartan king Lycurgus in 217 BC. The settlement, a *kome* according to Pausanias (4.31.3), a *polis* according to Stephanus Byzantius (347.16), was situated on the western slopes of the central part of Mount Taygetos, in the Dentheliatis region (Roman *Ager Denthaliatis*), an area disputed for centuries by the Messenians and the Lakedaimonians, until its final demarcation (Kolbe 1904: 366; Steinhauer 1988: 219-232; Koursoumis and Kosmopoulos 2013: 55-75).

Though little archaeological and historical information is attested, Kalamai is primarily regarded as a perioikic settlement (Luraghi 2008: 140). The acropolis hill, in the middle of the modern settlement, was probably walled in the Classical/Hellenistic period (Shipley 2004: 556). It seems that by the 1st century BC, when the area was under Messenian sovereignty, the hero Hipothoos was regarded as an ancestral god and worshipped accordingly (*IG* V 1, 1370; Luraghi 2008: 215). In the Roman period, a decree of the community (*IG* V 1, 1369–70) refers to the veneration of a Spartan citizen, who had lived in the *kome* for a short period, indicating that despite the political status, bonds with Sparta were maintained. In the mid-2nd century AD, Pausanias (4.31.3) associates Kalamai with Limnai, the area of the Limnatis sanctuary (Koursoumis 2014: 191-222), thus implying that it was by that time an integral part of the Messenian region.

The study and publication of the Demiova finds may be considered a small contribution to the scattered history of the area. Though the cave where they were discovered forty years ago is now missing, it is almost certain that the group was intended for cultic use. The chronology of the figurines extends from the early 5th century down to the 3rd century BC, indicating that the cult lasted at least three centuries, yet there is no data affirming duration or pauses. Despite minor differences in fabric, it is plausible that all terracottas came from local workshops, using the same clay and almost the same techniques in preparation, moulding and firing.

The location of the sanctuary in an extra-urban mountainous area, connected through the road network of central Taygetos with the sanctuary of Artemis Limnatis and the town of Pharai (modern Kalamata; Pikoulas 2012: 394, 397-399, 401, 459, 494), suggests that the cult was rural and popular, an argument further supported by the low quality of the finds. Although the types of figurines dedicated at Greek sanctuaries are not necessarily related, in terms of typology, to the cult and worshipped deities, the presence of female figurines in the Demiova cave, identified either as votaries or deities, suggests that the worshipped deity was female.

Finally, the presence of the tripartite terracotta figurine may be indicative of characteristics and properties ascribed to the goddess worshipped in the Demiova cave. The presence of the patron deity of Sparta, Orthia, at Kalamai, in addition to the diachronic relations of Kalamai with Sparta, probably affected the nature of the cult of this rural sanctuary. The cult of Orthia, associated with wild nature, childbirth, nurturing and bringing up children, was prevalent in Messenia and Laconia. Furthermore, the cult of Limnatis (Koursoumis 2014: 191-222), regarded as a variation of the cult of the Spartan Orthia (Luraghi 2008: 24 n. 34, 45), was also located in a border sanctuary in central Taygetos, in the vicinity of Kalamai, and apparently affected similar cults in smaller sanctuaries of the area. Eventually, it seems that a small, rural sanctuary in the middle of a mountainous no man's land was much more than recourse for local women, shepherds and lost passers-by, mirroring the complex and blurred history of the area.

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Popular religion and the beginnings of the Olympic Games

Panos Valavanis

In honour of Prof. Dr. Heide Froning

All religious manifestations, even the most complex and lavish, such as those conducted in the Panhellenic sanctuaries, started as simple expressions of popular faith and primeval religious rituals before being put under the auspices of a certain authority.

The sanctuary of Olympia was founded during the second half of the 11th century and, like most early sanctuaries, initially grew up by serving the needs of the local farming and stockbreeding communities. In those societies, fertility of the land and good health of the general population constituted, as one would expect, the basis of people's wellbeing and, consequently, their main concern. All of the above was confirmed by the discovery of almost 6000 clay and bronze animal figurines, found in the ash layer of an Iron Age open-air altar. They were votive figurines that the local farmers and stock breeders offered to the Gods, in order to place their property and the source of life and well-being under divine protection (Kyrieleis 2006).

According to ancient sources, it was either in 776 BC (Christesen 2007) or, according to other views, in the last quarter of the 8th century (Morgan 1990: 27-105) or ever since the very beginnings of worship (Valavanis 2006), that a new athletic event, foot racing, appeared in Olympia. On the face of it, this had nothing to do with the ritual procedure. This initial athletic activity was gradually enriched with other games, in such a way that from the Archaic period, and in combination with the sanctuary's expanded reputation, Olympia became the most important of all Panhellenic sanctuaries and, from its games, emerged the famous Olympic Games we are all familiar with today (Miller 2004: 113-128; Scott 2010: 146-180).

One of the pivotal issues of research concerns the beginnings of the foot race that constituted the starting point of the Olympic Games, as well as its role in early worship. Before addressing this issue, however, it would be fruitful to briefly mention the different theories regarding the establishment of the Olympic Games. These theories can be broadly divided into two groups (Ulf and Weiler 1980: 1-38; Evjen 1992; Kyle 2007: 101-109): a) those favouring religious, i.e. magical or worshipping pretexts and b) those who have a more pragmatic approach, advocating that the games were conducted within the context of religious celebrations, either because during such times people were, in a way, on holidays, idle and free from farming labours, or simply due to the large gatherings of crowds, thirsty for amusement until the sacrificial meat was cut and cooked! (Mikalson 2005: 28)

In the following part of the present paper, we will refer to the theories in the first category, since we believe them to be the only probable ones. The starting point of Olympic Games, therefore, could well have been:

a. Burial games in the context of a hero-cult.
b. Following a king's death, games conducted for the ascent to the throne of the rightful heir.
c. Games conducted in the context of worship festivities in honour of solar and lunar deities.
d. Various rites of passage and initiation practices conducted in order to test human stamina.
e. Games conducted within the context of worship festivities in honour of vegetation deities, to secure the land's fruitfulness.
f. Foot racing was one of the ways to choose the worshipper who was fastest and, therefore, the best and most favoured by the god, in order for him to light the fire on the altar of Zeus. With this view, first expressed by the 3rd century AD historian Philostratus (*Gymn.* 5), current researchers see a way to detect the divine wishes, since the games' success demand the god's goodwill (Valavanis 2006). Therefore, game events were, in a way, an extension, or even part of the religious procedure, since the winners verified the divine power (Reid 2011: 138-139).

My personal contribution to the relevant considerations is somewhat bold, as the following thoughts involve a considerable leap in time, beginning with examples from modern Greece. More specifically, I will refer to various games conducted in the context of modern religious manifestations of the Greek Orthodox faith, which, *prima facie*, do not seem relevant to the religious manifestation of which they form a part.

The best-known example takes place wherever Orthodox faith is practiced during the Epiphany feast day on January 6th, accompanied by the Great Blessing of the Waters. The religious ceremony takes place next to the sea and, as soon as it is finished, the priest throws the holy cross into the waters in order to sanctify them. At the same moment, a group of mainly young worshippers jump into the sea and swim, competing to see who can recover the holy cross first (Megas 1976). This swimming activity has apparently no relation to the religious ceremony itself, which could well have ended with the priest raising the holy cross once more, having sanctified the waters by immersing the holy symbol in the sea. In older times, but even today in many villages, the winner, after receiving the priest's blessing, places the holy cross in a tray together with a small branch of basil and has the honour of proceeding with it from one house to another, thus receiving people's praises and rewards.

There are many more similar athletic activities, following religious manifestations, in even more complex forms ever since the Byzantine period and the period when Greece was under Ottoman occupation. Today, they can still be found in many religious festivals throughout Greece. We will briefly refer to three of them that take place in farming/stockbreeding communities.

The oldest well-attested festival including athletic activities takes place in Ayios Konstantinos, Rethymnon, Crete during the Saint's commemoration day on May 21st (Psilakis 2005: 239). One rather important fact is that May 21st was crucial for the development of farming production. More specifically, farmers were trying to successfully anticipate the harvest's outcome judging from the day's weather. The first description comes from Cristoforo Buondelmonti, one of the earliest foreign travellers in Greece who visited Crete in 1415 (Buondelmonti 1981/1417: XI 1075-1083; Aposkitis 1983):

> 'We were woken up in the night by the noises the villagers were making as they were going to the chapel, accompanied by their wives. They were walking down the valley, one after the other, holding torches and singing. As soon as they arrived at the church of Ayios Konstantinos, they walked around it three times with their animals and food stocks. After the service, they laid blankets underneath the trees. While they were all rejoicing, youngsters were trying their best to win over their friends in wrestling and archery to the sound of drums and under the elders' gaze. The latter, exerting authority, were honouring the winner by placing on his head an olive branch wreath. They were also giving wreaths made from all kinds of flowers to the women excelling in dance'.

The second example comes from Ayia Paraskevi on the island of Lesvos, where a three day festival including a bull sacrifice is held at the beginning of summer (Aikaterinidis 1979: 65-70). After the first two days of ritual activities, followed by feasting during which the meat of the sacrificed bull is consumed, horse races take place. A wreath is placed on the head of the winner's horse, while the horseman takes a prize of a golden embroidered scarf and has the honour of passing by everyone's house, receiving treats.

The third festival takes place in Arachova. It has a pastoral character and its basic idea is to secure the availability of water (Varvounis 2000: 229-230, 240-253; Louskou and Nikolidakis 2006). The festival, recorded for the first time in 1676, lasts for three days and is dedicated to the town's patron saint, Ayios Georgios, commemorated on April 23rd. The feast is characterised by the great number of sporting events, which are divided over three days and after religious ceremonies have ended.

During the first day and following the litany of the icon of Saint George, there is a race of the elders wearing the traditional Greek heavy pleated kilt (*fustanella*) on the hill above the church. On the second day, after the church service, jumping and weight-lifting, using large cylindrical stones, take place in the churchyard. On the following day are the shot-putting, stone tossing, wrestling and tug-of-war. The prize in all sports is a young lamb or goat, offered by the stockbreeders for the wellbeing of the flocks. It is also characteristic that, through the practice of scapulomancy using shoulder blades from those animals, they attempt to forecast the weather for the following period (Varvounis 2000: 249-251; Louskou and Nikolidakis 2006: 235-253).

The general characteristics of these, and of many other popular athletic events in other regions of Greece, Cyprus, and the Balkans (Varvounis 2000: 224-234) can be summarised as follows:

a. These are never independent activities. They take place in the context of religious ceremonies, usually during the festivals held for specific Saints and always after the end of the church service. However, *prima facie*, they seem to have nothing to do with worship.
b. They usually take place in country chapels, in other words in close relation to nature, at the end of spring and beginning of summer.
c. Athletes are not professionals and belong to all social classes.
d. The most common sport is foot racing. Other athletic activities include stone tossing, wrestling, jumping, target shooting using stones and, in some cases, horse racing.
e. The games usually take place in the churchyard, but also in the village square or any other place where good visibility of the audience can be assured.
f. The judge (and prize-giver) is either the priest himself, or a group of churchwardens, or even the eldest and most respected members of the village.
g. All the villagers, as well as visitors from afar or nearby, depending on the area's reputation, are spectators of the event.

h. There is no monetary prize at any of the festivals. The award is in virtue: the winner is recognised and respected by everyone, thus becoming a living example for the others to follow. In case the prize is an object, this is mostly symbolic. If the winners do receive money, this comes from the gifts and rewards they receive from people.

Older researchers have previously studied these athletic events and usually interpreted them as modern Greek survivals of the ancient games, using them as evidence of the continuity of ancient Greek civilisation (Bibliography in Varvounis 2000: 225; Puchner 2009: 122-162). However, modern research tends to differentiate these athletic activities from ancient Greece and link them to essential forms of exercise which take place during specific periods in the cycle of life of traditional communities, thus signalling and emphasising human activity (Varvounis 2000: 234-235; Puchner 2009: 180-206). Social anthropologists consider the starting point of these games to be the need of the individual to demonstrate speed, strength and skills, aiming at distinction and social acceptance, elements that are necessary in all types of communities.

However, some folklorists and social anthropologists go even further than that (Varvounis 2000: 234-235). The elements of competition and victory encapsulated in the games take them back to older forms of magical/religious significance, thus giving them a fertility-bestowing role, supporting nature's forces and fertility of the land, objectives that were vital to any traditional community. Today, therefore, similar athletic activities integrated into customs of popular faith are linked to the ritual attainment of fertility through competition (Puchner 1989).

The reason why these games are not independent, but instead always take place within the context of religious feasts honouring gods or saints, is because the games are trying to influence the divine powers, as are the rest of the activities taking place during the specific religious event. Moreover, their incorporation into Christian worship signifies the insertion of primordial perceptions and beliefs into a modern religious setting. A characteristic also pointing in this direction is that the selection of specific saints to celebrate is prompted by those times of the year that are crucial to the farming/animal breeding of each area. Therefore, modern Greek popular games aim at supporting the forces of nature with the energy emitted during the athletic events, combined with other acts of worship such as processions, hymns, prayers, dances etc. In the same way, the swimmers' competition for the holy cross aims at reinforcing the energy for the sanctification of the water by the priest.

Since modern Greek popular sports a) do not constitute an athletic element surviving since the ancient times, b) are practiced in areas with a primary social structure similar to the ancient one, and c) have many characteristics in common with the ancient games, we can use them as parallel examples, despite the great time gap between them, to detect the reasons for which foot racing was first introduced into early worship at Olympia.

Our first conclusion would be that we should not consider primary foot racing to be a sport, but rather a ritual activity. Therefore, before foot racing became an autonomous athletic activity, it was an action of worship and part of the ritual. This is a fundamental point for the understanding of the present topic. As with the processions, sacrifices, prayers, hymns and ritual dances, foot racing had the same aim: to influence the divinity in such a way that the latter would look favourably on people's needs.

Our second conclusion concerns the fertility bestowing role of the game, in other words the reinforcement of nature's power in order to have a fruitful and productive year. This kind of evidence supports those researchers who believe that the beginnings of the Olympic Games were based on fertility rituals (Cartledge 1985: 106-107). Besides, it is not coincidental that foot racing existed in a number of other ancient Greek festivals with a strong fertility-bestowing element. For example, during the Athenian Oschophoria festival, youngsters ran from the sanctuary of Dionysus to the sanctuary of Athena Skiras in Phalerum, holding branches laden with bunches of grapes (*oschos*). In the Laconian Carnea festival, the Dorians' largest celebration, youths called *staphylodromoi* ('grape-cluster-runners'), ran naked, their name suggesting that the custom of running was closely linked to the vintage (Scanlon 2002: 90, 286–290; Miller 2004: 146-149).

Our third conclusion, regarding the inception of the Games in ancient Olympia, is that since the foot race constitutes an essential part of the ritual, it should have been part of the Games from their very beginning, rather than a later addition (Valavanis 2006).

In conclusion, we would say that – despite all the great changes that took place during the thousands of years of human civilisation and even though, in all those centuries, authorities have forcefully imposed official religious ideas and ritual procedures – ancient popular beliefs and worshipping practices that were established in ancient times still continue to exist, flowing like a rivulet next to the big river. They survive because they are so powerful, being inextricably bound to people's basic need to seek refuge in God for the protection of their life and wellbeing.

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